







Taylor Jane  
The contribution  
of 22 to a periodical  
work

vol. - 1.

1826

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

\*THE pieces collected together in these volumes, with the exception of two or three not before published, appeared during the course of seven years, in the Youth's Magazine. The first of them was printed in the number for February, 1816 ; from which time they were continued, with few interruptions, till the end of the year 1822, when Miss Taylor's declining health obliged her to desist entirely from literary occupations.

Very soon after the commencement of her regular contributions to the Youth's Magazine, my sister had reason to believe that, through the medium of its pages, she had succeeded in gaining, in a high degree, the attention of a very large number of young persons. An assurance so encouraging inspired her with the earnest desire to improve the

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

favourable impression she had made, for promoting the best interests of her readers; and whether she was grave or gay, she never lost sight of this object. Her friends have generally concurred in the opinion that many of these pieces are among the happiest efforts of her pen; and that a republication of them was due to their merit. In compliance with this opinion she had revised and prepared for the press the greater part of the papers, not long before her last illness; and she left with me instructions for the publication of the whole.

It is with pleasure that I avail myself of this opportunity to express publicly, to the conductors of the *Youth's Magazine*, the sense which I know my late sister always entertained of the kindness and liberality of their conduct towards herself, during the years in which she was a stated contributor to that useful and widely circulated publication.

I. T. JUN.

*Ongar, September 23, 1824.*

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# THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF

Q. Q.

I.

SEVEN YEARS AGO.



*To the Editor of the Youth's Magazine.*

SIR,

**I** FLATTER myself that your youthful readers will not be unwilling to attend to the admonitions of one who, only seven years ago, was even as they are, that is; one of your youthful readers. I am this day one and twenty: and although my coming of age was an event to which I had long looked forward with no ordinary degree of satisfaction, I must confess that certain reflections with which I am about to acquaint you, have tended very greatly to damp my spirits; and to embitter the many warm congratulations of my kind friends on the occasion.

Upon retiring to my room after the festivities of the day are over, I feel much disposed to communicate to you the cause of my dissatisfaction; with a view, not only of relieving my own mind, but



conscious of a constant aversion to steady application, which occasioned my being, at this time, behind-hand with many of my juniors. My disposition was not otherwise than affectionate; but my temper being proud and irritable, caused much uneasiness both to myself and to my friends. I had frequent disputes with my brothers and sisters; and often, indeed, behaved very unbecomingly to my kind parents; and bitterly as I always repented it afterwards, still the habit was unsubdued. With regard to religion, although I was too well taught not to have, at times, very serious thoughts, and some uneasiness on the subject, still I stopped short where so many do, at *wishes* and *intentions*. I was, however, extremely dissatisfied with this state of things; and there was nothing good, or even great, that I did not fully *intend* to become by the time my education should be completed. And the elasticity of my spirits on that cheerful morning, the vigour of body and mind I then possessed, together with the sanguineness of youth, made me readily believe that all I wished would certainly be accomplished.

I spent the day merrily with my companions; not troubling myself about my plans of reformation on that day, because it was my *birth-day*.

The next morning, however, I did rise an hour earlier than usual: for early rising was one of the good habits I intended to acquire; it being one

on which, as my dear father used to say, all the rest very greatly depended. Being not a little pleased with myself on this account, I came in to breakfast, after an hour's pleasant application, in great good humour;—overcame two or three little provocations without expressing resentment; and applied to all my pursuits very assiduously the whole day. Now I imagined every difficulty conquered. The next day I rose but one quarter of an hour later;—only answered *rather* impatiently when my elder brother contradicted me; and omitted nothing of my business, except getting one of my French verbs. But on the day following, it being a raw dismal morning, the bell, as usual, rang for prayers before I had finished dressing. This disconcerted me. It is not easy to maintain a good humour and a bad conscience at the same time. To the first person who spoke to me, I gave a cross answer;—had one dispute with my brother, and two with my sister before dinner;—sat down to my lessons in an idle mood;—did them all indifferently; and at night hurried over my prayer just as carelessly as usual.

Thus passed that unpromising day. But what will you say, Sir, when I inform you, that with a few exceptions, such as I have described above, when under the influence of some present stimulus, or new formed resolution, it is a pretty fair specimen of all the rest, from that period to the

present moment! I do not deny, indeed, but that I have made some progress in the various branches of education; nor that some of my more childish failings have been superseded by maturer and less obvious faults; but I must say, that upon comparing what I now am with what I intended to be seven years ago, or even with what I might reasonably have hoped to be, my disappointment is complete. Nor am I able to alleviate it by laying the blame upon my education. I have enjoyed fair opportunities—had every thing to stimulate and to encourage me: but I wanted that strength of mind, that steady resolution, that constant unflinching effort to resist *small* temptations, and to conquer *slight* difficulties, which make the grand difference between the strong and the weak—the virtuous and the unworthy; between the Christian and the cumberer of the ground. Besides, instead of profiting by past experience, I was perpetually placing an unwarrantable dependance on the future. As one year after another passed away, I still hoped better things from the next, and the next; and, ever yielding to the dangerous illusion, neglected to make the effort needful at the *present moment*. Oh, to look back upon those golden opportunities!

But, Sir, I intend not to trouble you with my complaints any farther than as they may prove useful to others. Many of your readers have

probably as long, or a still longer period of their minority before them. How unspeakable an advantage! How vast a difference at this period of life, between seven years *ago*, and seven years to *come*! However the past may have been misimproved, the future—the fair, bright, promising future—is still unconsumed, unwasted: that period of life of all others the most important, because upon it the formation of the character almost entirely depends, is yet, as it were, in their own power. Let them not suppose that it depends upon the particular bent of their genius, or cast of their disposition, whether or not they are to rise above the common level of intellectual and moral excellence; or upon the exertions of their parents and teachers; it depends, as a means, upon *their own exertions*. All things are possible, I believe—all things, at least, that are good and desirable for us—to *persevering effort*: and without this, as I so well know, seven years, or seven times seven will do nothing for us;—nothing, but strengthen bad habits, weaken good resolutions, and remove opportunities of improvement. Those temptations to delay and negligence which we feel to day, will as assuredly return to-morrow, as the morning light; return too, with increased force, though increased in too imperceptible a degree to give the alarm.

Perhaps some of your readers may imagine,

that however it may be with regard to other things, I have yet time enough before me for religion; and have little occasion to reproach myself for not being quite decided in that respect, at the age of twenty one. Alas! Sir, I need not tell you that this is the most grievous part of my complaint, and the true source of all the rest. Had I but listened to the admonitions of Scripture, reason, and conscience, seven years ago, all that I wished would have followed of course. Religion, you know, is a sure remedy for carelessness, frivolity, slothful habits and evil tempers. I believe, indeed, that it makes hard things easy, and irksome things pleasant.

Besides this, I believe it is not possible for any one who has been favoured with a religious education, to resist for seven years the convictions of conscience, to suffer all the impressions made by sermons, the admonitions of friends, and good books, to wear off, without such an effect being produced in stilling the conscience and hardening the heart, as to render the whole business of religion, so far as it depends on our own efforts, unspeakably more difficult than it would have been

SEVEN YEARS AGO.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

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## II.

### GOVERNMENT OF THE THOUGHTS.

THERE is a prevailing desire in the minds of many young people to be freed from the restraints of authority;—an impatience for that period to arrive when they shall be at liberty to direct their own actions. It is not, perhaps, very uncommon for them to imagine that they should be more willing even to do right—that it would be easier, and far more agreeable—if it were no longer a matter of constraint, but of choice.

To any who may have entertained such ideas, I would propose a method by which they may already ascertain their powers of self government; and direct them to a sphere of action, which, whatever their present circumstances may be, is subject to no external control; where parents, tutors, friends, have no dominion; where they are already emancipated from every outward restraint. Here then they may try their strength and prove their skill; and if they fail here, it is but reasonable to conclude that they would be, at least, equally unsuccessful, if entrusted with the direction of their own conduct.

But in what way, it may be asked, are persons whose time, pursuits, actions, whose very recre-

ations are in a measure regulated by others, at liberty to command themselves? There are, indeed, several ways in which this question might be profitably answered; but we shall at present confine ourselves to one, and reply—*Thought is free*. Here is a boundless field, over which the youngest and most strictly guarded possesses unlimited dominion. Here the eye of the most watchful friend cannot penetrate. At the very moment that a child is gratifying a parent's feelings by some *act* of obedience, the *thoughts* may be so employed as would incur his severest displeasure. There is but One whose eye discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart;" and a lively recollection of *that* eye being over present, beholding and recording all that passes within, would, indeed, supersede every other consideration.

Here then, let the proud spirit, impatient of control, and confident of his strength to resist temptation and avoid danger, begin to exercise his self-command. And here let the modest and ingenuous, who cheerfully submit to wholesome restraint and parental guidance, give double diligence in guarding and regulating that to which parental authority cannot extend.

All self-government begins here. He who cannot command his *thoughts*, must not hope to control his *actions*. The smallest attention to our

own minds must convince us that the thoughts require restraint. If left to pursue their own course, they will assuredly take a wrong one. Three different descriptions of thought might be mentioned, closely indeed connected with each other, but which generally, perhaps, occur in the following order:—*idle* thoughts, *vain* thoughts, and *wicked* thoughts.

*Idle* thoughts are those which ramble wantonly about the mind, ranging from one object to another, just as they will, without any effort being made to divert them into a useful channel. It might afford a profitable illustration of our meaning, if the train of thought passing through the mind of a young lady, for instance, while sitting for an hour alone at her work-table, could be taken down as it occurs.—Perhaps she would herself be startled to peruse the motley record. Or should she be disposed to plead in her excuse that it was rather silly than sinful, let her remember, that “the thought of foolishness is sin.” It is not said the thought of *wickedness*, but the thought of *foolishness*. And it is so, because it wastes time and talents which might be profitably employed, and for which we must render an account. It is not sufficient that the hands are occupied, the mind may be idle whilst they are busy: and how much mischief and misery may be traced to indolence of mind! Thought is the chief prerogative



of our being; the great means of ennobling and reforming it: it makes the grand distinction between the man and the brute. And yet, would it be paying too high a compliment to the capacities of the linnet or the lap-dog, (who we may suppose to be the aforesaid young lady's companions at her work-table,) to presume that the train of ideas or sensations, passing through their brains at the same time, would be at least as well worthy of note as those of their mistress? I would gladly amuse my readers with the alternate cogitations of the lap-dog, the linnet, and the lady; but being unwilling to hazard a conjecture with regard to the two former, I leave them to furnish those of the latter for themselves. If "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," it is no less true of idle thoughts. They are the first means he employs to ensnare us: of them we are not much afraid, and therefore are easily led on to the next step, which is short and easy indeed.

By *vain* thoughts, we may understand those wilful excursions of the imagination, those airy visions of future happiness, (as improbable as they are indeed undesirable,) which, it is to be feared, are by many, not only admitted, but encouraged. If any young persons should yield to this kind of mental indulgence, under the idea of its being a harmless amusement, it can only be for want of observation of their own minds, or for want

of sufficient experience of its consequences. Its effects on the mind are much the same as those of intemperance on the body; enfeebling its powers, rendering every present occupation insipid—every duty dry, and creating a distaste for all mental improvement; at the same time that it cherishes the love of self, and blunts every benevolent and generous sentiment. Nor is it too much to say, that an habitual indulgence of these visionary pleasures is absolutely incompatible with religious improvement. The mind, whose favourite employment is forming plans and wishes for possessing the pleasures, honours, riches, vanities of this world, cannot be seeking, “*first*, the kingdom of God;” cannot be “hungering and thirsting after righteousness;” cannot have “fixed its affections on things above.” Well then might David exclaim, “I hate *vain* thoughts, but thy law do I love.” He knew that to love both was impossible, for he sets them in direct opposition to each other.

It is not necessary to describe, and we hope not needful to warn our readers against the last mentioned kind: indeed, if the two former be carefully guarded against, and dismissed from the mind as soon as they enter, there will be little danger that *wicked* thoughts should gain admission. But let none hope to escape even from these, if licence be given to the others. The

distance and difference between *vain* and *wicked* thoughts, 'is much less than may be imagined; it is but another step, a step soon and easily, and often unconsciously taken. Who then will dispute that "the thought of foolishness is sin!"—Who but has need to watch and pray that they enter not into this temptation!"

If a habit of indulging vain and sinful thoughts be so injurious to the moral and intellectual powers, how healthful, how desirable is a well-regulated mind, which has acquired such a command over itself, as to be able to call off the thoughts instantly from unprofitable wanderings, and fix them on useful and important subjects! Youth is the time for forming this habit: if neglected then, it will, in after life, be by painful laborious efforts only, that the mind can be brought to profitable reflection and meditation; from which it will be ever liable to be diverted by every trifle that presents itself to the senses.

All mental superiority originates in habits of *thinking*. A child, indeed, like a machine, may be made to perform certain functions by external means; but it is only when he begins to *think* that he rises to the dignity of a rational being. Are we at a loss for subjects of improving and interesting thought? O, look around! regard the heavens above and the earth beneath. The wonders and beauties of nature are of themselves

inexhaustible sources of delightful contemplation. That must be a low, frivolous mind, in which a glance at the starry heavens excites no interest, no curiosity, no admiration, no reverence for the great Creator. Many of our employments (and this remark especially applies to female employments) are happily of such a nature, as to leave the mind at liberty. Let no one imagine that she is not responsible for the manner in which that liberty is used. While the useful needle is performing its humble functions, what a noble privilege it is, that the mind may be engaged in the grandest pursuits that can occupy an intelligent being!

Why is it that so many who acknowledge generally the supreme importance of religion, yet from year to year *neglect* that great salvation? It is for want of thought. Idle and vain thoughts are the "weeds which spring up and choke" every good impression; and prevent all serious reflection. Oh, we should be ashamed to mention the *trifles* that, it is to be feared, occupy hours and years of eager, anxious thought, and cause such subjects as death, heaven, and eternity, to appear dull, insipid, and unimportant! Let our young readers inquire for *themselves* to what themes their thoughts most gladly and naturally recur. And happy, happy they, who, after such an investigation can sincerely exclaim, "O

how love I *thy* law; it is my *meditation* all the day!"

Let none be discouraged from attempting to acquire the right regulation of their thoughts, by the difficulties they may have to encounter. Habit will render that easy and delightful, which, at first, appears dry and difficult. The mind will gradually become enlarged and ennobled; will feel disgusted at the trifles which used to satisfy it, and aspire to pursuits and pleasures of the highest order. To be prepared for the great change—meetened for a world of intellectual and spiritual enjoyment, will then appear to us the grand concern of life, the "one thing needful." Then shall we be able to say with the Psalmist, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

### III.

#### A DAY'S PLEASURE.

ONE fine May morning a large party of young people, of which I was one, set off for the purpose of viewing a nobleman's seat at some miles distance. This was an excursion to which we had for some time been looking forward with much

pleasure. It had been long promised us, and the day fixed more than once; but the weather, or some other untoward circumstance, had hitherto disappointed us. But now every obstacle was removed—the party assembled, and when, after many presages of bad weather, with which some of the least sanguine and more experienced of our number had alarmed us the night before;—when, after all these forebodings, the carriages drew up, and we found ourselves safely seated and driving off, there was not an eye that did not sparkle with pleasure.

The morning was bright and promising. Who does not know—who, at least, does not *remember*, how unusually blue and bright the sky appears on a holiday morning? The fields were yet sparkling with dew-drops. Some early husbandmen going forth to their work, saluted us as we passed. The lark sang merrily over our heads. There was not a cloud—no, not one, to be seen from east to west: O, it was a lovely morning! We were in open carriages; which was the more agreeable as the first part of our road, especially, lay through a most delightful country, richly cultivated, and now all covered with the verdure of spring. We were, as may be imagined, in the highest spirits, and laughed we knew not why. When the first glow of happiness, occasioned by setting off, had subsided, we began to expatiate on the expected

pleasures of the day. The place of our destination was one of the finest seats for many miles round. We had heard it talked of very often; but none of us young ones had yet seen it. Most of the beauties and curiosities had been described to us, and on these our imaginations fixed with delighted anticipation;—The grotto; the hot-houses, with their rare collection of foreign plants; the picture-gallery; and, above all, the curious old tapestry hangings, which decorated one of the apartments, and which were esteemed the greatest curiosity of the place. Then there was the fine Belvidere at the top of the hill, which commanded, we were told, a most extensive prospect. You might from thence see five counties: and on a very clear day you might just distinguish Gloucester Cathedral. “Well, we could not have a clearer day than this,” said we: “so we shall see five counties, and Gloucester Cathedral!” Thus we went chatting along.

But we had scarcely reached the third milestone, before our pleasure was greatly damped by the indisposition of one of our party. She had risen with a head-ach, but strove to conceal it: however, it became so much worse with the motion of the carriage that she was quite unable to proceed; so with great reluctance we were obliged to leave her at a friend's house, which

stood by the road's side. This misfortune cast a gloom upon us during the greater part of the ride. She was one of the most lively and intelligent of our whole party: there was not one but could have been better spared. However, as we drew near the end of our journey our spirits revived, and our regret for the loss of our companion gradually subsided.

But now a new cause of uneasiness arose:—A few rather threatening clouds had for some time been gathering in the south-west, which the elder part of the company regarded with an anxious eye. We young ones, however, were persuaded they would soon pass off; and as they began to gather over head, we declared that we should prefer it being cloudy during the heat of the day. "Yes, it would be much pleasanter!" just as I said the word, I felt a large drop of rain upon my cheek, which was quickly followed by many more; and now the most sanguine of us took the alarm. When we were yet a mile from the place of our destination, a soaking shower came on, to which, being without any shelter, we were completely exposed. Still we tried to laugh at our misfortunes: till, upon approaching the place, the rain fell with redoubled violence; and as we galloped up the avenue, it ran streaming off in spouts and torrents from our hats and parasols. We had, therefore, little inclination to look about us: the



first thing, as soon as we arrived, was to beg the charity of the servants; and we were completely occupied, for a full hour, in drying our clothes, and refitting, before a large fire in the house-keeper's parlour. By the time this was done, and we had partaken of some refreshments, we began to make ourselves so merry with the adventure, that some of us thought we gained as much in fun as we lost in sunshine.

It still rained: so giving up all thoughts of an excursion without, for the present, we proceeded to view the apartments. They were splendid indeed, and we were delighted: for my own part, the only thing that prevented my being quite as much so as I expected, was, that my exposure to the rain had brought on a slight tooth-ach; it was not violent, but yet just enough to take off the edge of my enjoyment. I went about holding a handkerchief to my face; and when any of my companions pointed me to any thing remarkable, I could only nod assent, and smile somewhat pitiously. Upon inquiring for the tapestry hangings, we were informed that they were always taken down when the family was absent; they had been removed only the day before.

The continuance of the rain, while it prevented our expected ramble about the grounds, yet afforded us an opportunity of examining more at leisure the curiosities within; with this consi-

deration we consoled ourselves. When we had viewed every apartment, and fully satisfied our curiosity, we were joined in the picture-gallery by the old house-steward, a venerable man, who, as he told us, had served the family for upwards of fifty years. He presently began recounting to us some of the family history, and many amusing anecdotes, pointing with his staff to the portraits of those to whom they related.—“This,” said he, “is poor Lady Susan, who died when she was only seventeen; and there is old Sir James, taken when he was a child, playing with his favourite spaniel: he was the present Earl’s great grandfather.” We were much amused with this antiquated man and his stories; and agreed it compensated to us for not seeing the tapestry.

It was now growing late in the afternoon: we had given up all hope of reaching the Belvidere, and viewing the gardens; and were still lingering about the picture-room, when suddenly a bright golden beam of sunshine broke into the apartment; it streamed down the long gallery, and lighted up the pale faces and faded draperies of the old brown portraits, from one end to the other. An exclamation of joy burst at the same instant from the whole party. We hastened to the windows: already a broad line of bright sky appeared along the horizon; the clouds were dispersing in all directions; the rain had nearly ceased; and

the heavy clouds that were rolling off on the opposite side exhibited a brilliant rainbow. By the time we were equipped for our ramble, all was clear over-head; it was a beautiful evening. The grass was wet to the foot, and the trees were yet dropping with rain; but all was fresh, green and sparkling. Once again our spirits revived: it was not, indeed, the lively, bounding joy with which we set off in the morning, but a more serene and chastened feeling.

We now visited the grotto, the gardens, and hot-houses; it was but a hasty inspection, as the ground was so wet that we were fearful of lingering; we were anxious, too, to reach the Belvedere before sun-set. At length, with wet shoes and weary steps, we climbed the hill. The exhalations which were now rising in consequence of the heavy rain, in a great degree obscured the prospect, but at the same time added to its brilliancy; for, being illumined by the setting sun, the whole wide expanse of country which the height commanded, was, as it were, one flood of golden mist. The five counties we had thought so much of, were not indeed so distinctly discernible as we had seen them on the map; however, our attendant pointed to each, and we believed that there they were. As for the Cathedral, we were obliged to take it for granted that it lay in the direction of the guide's walking-stick.

We waited a few minutes to see the sun set behind the distant hills: it was a splendid scene; and, as he assured us, was almost as fine a sight as the Cathedral.

We now descended the hill, very well satisfied; and, being by this time considerably fatigued, were not sorry to find ourselves re-seated in the carriages, and on our way home. The evening continued fine but chilly; and the latter part of the way it was very dark. At first we talked over our adventures; but some of the party soon dropped to sleep, and conversation flagged with the rest. We were weary, and our heads ached. I question if any thing we had seen during the whole day afforded us more real pleasure than the sight of the cheerful lights in our own house, as we approached it. We were certainly pleased with our excursion, notwithstanding its misfortunes; and yet I believe, had it been proposed to us to set off on a similar expedition the next day, we should none of us have been disposed to comply. The friend we left ill by the way, we found quite restored. She had spent the day at home very happily; and when she heard of our misfortunes, was glad she had escaped them. We were all thankful to retire to rest that night. The next morning at breakfast, at grand papa's request, I related the adventures of the day.—His reflections upon our excursion, (to introduce which

is my only reason for troubling the reader with this recital,) shall be the subject of a following paper.

## IV.

## REFLECTIONS ON A DAY'S PLEASURE.

GRAND-PAPA having listened with great attention to the foregoing recital, and to our various animadversions upon it, began as follows.

“ I am an old man, children; and my *day's pleasure* is so nearly over, that I am well able to compare it with yours. Our short life is but like a long day; and when I recollect the alternations of hope and fear, of success and disappointment, of pleasure and of pain, that have chequered the greater part of it;—the storms that I have seen blow up, and blow over;—the serenity of its decline, and the hopes I entertain of arriving, before long, at a safe and comfortable home,—I must say, that my *day* has so much resembled yours, that what you have related, has seemed like a relation of my own history. And since there has been nothing remarkable to distinguish my life from that of other men; since I have, undoubtedly, had my full share of success, prosperity,

and enjoyment, I think I may fairly regard it, not only as a counterpart to my own life in particular, but to life in general ; or, to come to the conclusion I intended, that you, dear children, may consider your excursion as a fair specimen of what you have to expect in the *day of life* : so that the experience of this one day, may serve as a sample of all the rest.

Here you are, all in fine spirits, just setting out on your journey. It is yet early morning with you ; the sun is up, and the sky clear ; the road fine and flowery ; and yet, pleasures in *prospect* rather than those at present possessed, are the chief sources of your felicity. The first circumstance that occurred yesterday to damp your pleasure was the loss of one of your party. Now, this is a misfortune which may be certainly expected early in the journey of life. Of a company of young people beginning life together, and hoping to pursue their course hand in hand, how commonly does it happen that one and another are stopped in their career, leaving their companions to pursue the journey without them ! And as it was with you, so it generally happens, that those who are taken are the loveliest, the liveliest ;—those whose society can be least spared, and who must be the most regretted. Such a breach spoils our pleasure for a time : but time, as you found it, and the new scenes that present themselves at

every turn, reconcile us to the loss ; till at length it is little felt, perhaps, rarely remembered.

The place of your destination, and its various curiosities, which you were so eager to see, may represent those favourite schemes and projects which we are apt to lay out for ourselves in life, and to which our chief hopes and efforts are directed. All goes on fair for a time ; we are in the direct road to our wishes ; but just as we come within sight of them, the clouds begin to gather, and down comes the storm, when, perhaps, we are driving straight up to their accomplishment. They who have marked well the ways of Providence, must have observed, that our earthly aims and wishes are oftener thus damped and embittered to us, than entirely frustrated. We are suffered to attain the object, but something unforeseen occurs to check the satisfaction we had expected in it. Now it is that our spirits sink, and we are ready to think our day's pleasure quite spoiled. But, like yours, it frequently happens, that some unexpected alleviation, some little, unforeseen circumstance attending our calamities, renders them supportable. Our very surprise at finding things not so bad to bear as we had expected, often amounts to positive pleasure.

Well, you saw the apartments, and were upon the whole very well pleased. And thus it is, that we are generally indulged with a moderate share

of the common comforts and enjoyments of life. We do not, perhaps, see the *tapestry*. That is, some *particular* gratification on which our hearts were most set, is withheld. Now, while walking through the apartments, is the busy part of life; and, notwithstanding some disappointments, our satisfaction would be considerable, if it were not for a *something*, like your tooth-ach, my dear, to take off its edge. Nothing could more aptly represent the continual uneasiness occasioned by the little daily crosses of life, too trifling to be seriously complained of. And this is not *my* testimony alone: the accumulated experience of ages will attest, that some such nameless sources of dissatisfaction ever attend upon all our pursuits and undertakings, and mingle even with our holiday pleasures.

It was a fine morning; but it rained all day. Ah! this is like life. You may not think it, children; but I *know* it. Yet this very circumstance, it seems, was productive of some advantage. Thus every wise and good man will look back on seasons of adversity, and acknowledge that it was good for him to have passed through them. When you had given up all hope of fine weather, you were suddenly surprised with a ray of sunshine. Thus are some of the heaviest storms of life suddenly dispersed; not in the time and manner that we had expected, but in such a way as we could not have



calculated upon. You did therefore, at last, view the grounds, and climb the hill; but it was late in the day, with wet shoes, and in haste. Just as we are often not permitted to arrive at the summit of our desires until the decline of life, when it can be possessed but for a short time, and when our capacities for enjoyment are greatly weakened. You reached the Belvidere, and had an indistinct view of the five counties: but that circumstance, which you had so long anticipated, disappointed your expectations; and as for the cathedral, it was not to be seen at all. Thus, when we *are* permitted to reach the height of our wishes, the result is sure to disappoint us. Our imaginations had painted it too gaily; and our chief satisfaction arises, not so much from the success of our scheme, as from some simple circumstance attending it, which, like the fine glowing sunset, was unthought of in our calculation.

You were cheered by the sudden fineness of the evening, and the late accomplishment of your hopes: but, like the chastened tranquillity of age, your cheerfulness was of a very different character from the lightsome, joyous spirits of the morning.

After all, though you had some entertainment upon the whole, yet, if you had the offer of going over the same events to-day, you would not feel disposed to accept it. Now, this is what I, and every one, I believe, of my age, must say of *our*

day's pleasure. Could our youth be renewed like the eagle's; yet we should decline the offer, if it must be upon the condition of living over again all the vicissitudes and anxieties, all the sorrows and sins of the past. Wearied even with pleasure, you were glad to set off on your return home. The evening was chilly and dark; and you were more disposed to sleep than to converse. This, as you see in your poor old grandfather, is not unlike the condition and infirmities of old age.

Thus far our comparison is pretty exact: and well will it be for us if it need not stop here! The sight of home at last, gave you, perhaps, more true pleasure than any thing you had seen in the day. And there are some who can say the same of the long home to which they are hastening. All are, more or less, weary of life and need rest: yet, how many shrink from, and at last come short of it. You had a kind father to receive you, and a comfortable home; and the companion you dropped at the commencement of your journey, was ready to welcome your return. And if it should be thus with us at the end of the day of life, it will signify little indeed, what accidents befall us by the way. "In our Father's house are many mansions." "There is a rest remaining for the people of God." And there, many dear friends who are gone before, await our arrival. They regret not that they were stopped short in their

course, but, like your friend, rejoice that they got safe home so early, and thus escaped all the misfortunes of the road.

Your day's pleasure is now over: and you all feel that the little accidents which disconcerted you yesterday, are of no consequence at all *to-day*. You can now smile at its misfortunes; and as for its pleasures, they are *past*, and are now nothing to you. But suppose you had found no home to return to; or an uncomfortable one, exposed to the weather, and filled with bad, quarrelsome company! Of how much greater value is the smallest convenience and comfort you enjoy here, because it is to last for years, than all the pleasures of that one day, put together! Or suppose that from morning to night it had been one continued storm; suppose you had not been able to reach the place of your destination at all; that *many* instead of one of your company had been left behind;—that your carriages had broken down, and every other misfortune had befallen you that can be imagined;—what then? your day's pleasure would have been spoiled, it is true; but it was *only* a day, and now all is over. Now, this is just the state of the case with regard to time and eternity; only the comparison falls far short of the truth. They who, devoted to the pleasures of this life, take no care to ensure an entrance into that rest, act infinitely more unwisely than you would have done, if, for the sake

of enjoying that one day's recreation, you had left your house to be overrun with robbers, or destroyed by fire; knowing, that upon your return at night, you would have no shelter, no home, no father to receive you.

But is it true, that our youthful hopes are so fallacious, that there are so many drawbacks to our pleasure, and that there is so large a mixture of pain? What does this teach us?—first, not to give life a *wrong name*: after all, it is not a day of *pleasure*, but a day of *business*. We came into life not to please ourselves, but to do the will of Him that sent us; and especially, “to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Again, we should learn hereby “not to set our affections on things below:” it is to teach us *this* lesson, which we are slow to learn, that so many trials are allotted us. Our Heavenly Father does not willingly afflict and disappoint us. He does it in mercy, to wean us from the world to which we cling. We should also learn by the disappointments attending our schemes, not to desire to order our own lot in life; since we cannot foresee how they will succeed, nor what will most promote our welfare. Let us leave it to Him, who sees the end from the beginning, and who will then cause “all things to work together for our good.” Above all, let us learn to care less for the things of time, and more for those of eternity. Do not our years pass like “a tale that

is told?" "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being given us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it."

Thus grand-papa concluded his discourse; which, thinking it might prove instructive to others as well as to ourselves, I have, as I promised, transcribed for the perusal of the reader.

## V.

### FASHIONS FOR OCTOBER.

*"Be clothed with humility," and have "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."*

THIS is the most graceful, becoming, and, at the same time, novel costume that has ever solicited public patronage. The mantle is of the most exquisite hue and delicate texture; tastefully decorated with the above-mentioned costly brilliants; and will be found to unite every advantage of utility and elegance. This dress is suitable to all seasons, and is considered equally becoming to the young and the old. It possesses extraordinary durability; is less liable to take a soil than any

other material, and retains its freshness and novelty to the last. It falls over the person in the most graceful folds; and is so adjusted as to veil every blemish, and set off the least favourable figure to the best possible advantage. The colour usually preferred for this costume is invisible green, which casts the most delicate shade upon the whole form, and produces an effect indescribably agreeable and prepossessing. Nothing can be more tastefully imagined, than the ornament with which this mantle is finished; and although this jewel is pronounced by the best judges to be of immense value, it may be obtained upon very reasonable terms. It is so delicate in its hue, and so chaste and simple in its workmanship, that it has been mistaken, by unskilful observers, for an ordinary pebble: but connoisseurs instantly recognize it, and allow it to be "*more precious than rubies.*" Notwithstanding the many recommendations it possesses, this dress has never become common, although universally approved. It was once worn as a royal robe, and has ever since been held in high estimation and general use, amongst the subjects of the great Prince who first introduced it.

The figurative language of the Bible will always allow of the most plain, and practical interpretation. When our Lord, for instance, relates the

parable of the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who sold all that he had to obtain one of great price, we are not to regard it as an entertaining fable. Its meaning is plainly this,—that eternal life is of such incalculable value, that it is infinitely worth while to part with every thing which must be sacrificed to its attainment. The merchant sold his all to gain one pearl; for, by this means, he would abundantly enrich himself: he acted wisely therefore, for “the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.” In like manner, whatever we may resign of present pleasure or advantage with a view to our eternal welfare, will prove so unspeakably advantageous in the end, that nothing but the grossest blindness and inattention to our own interests, could make us unwilling to do so.

The language of the apostle Peter, quoted above, is no less plain and practical in its import. The apparel he recommends, is no fancy dress which we are not really expected to wear. On the contrary, we may—we *must*, if we are Christians, be thus clothed with humility, and have this ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Some of our young readers would probably hear with considerable interest, that the most becoming dress and the most brilliant jewels ever worn, were offered for their acceptance. Now, this is truly the case. Clothed with humility, and adorned with a meek

and quiet spirit, they would be more richly attired than in the most costly array. Who then will turn away disappointed from such a gift, and think some sparkling bauble more desirable! Oh! remember in whose sight this ornament is of "great price." It is well to pause and reflect closely upon such an assertion. Many such passages of Scripture are, it is to be feared, passed over with slight attention, so that their force and beauty are little perceived. Many, perhaps, who spend some precious hours every day in reflection upon their outward decorations, have never stopped to meditate upon this striking declaration—*in the sight of God of great price*. He who forms the most accurate and impartial estimate of the true and comparative value of all things, He who formed and gave their lustre to those shining gems we so greatly admire, is fully aware of whatever beauty and value they possess. Yet, He says, "*not with gold, and pearls, and costly array,*" but "*with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*" It is not our present intention, to enter upon that part of the subject to which the words just quoted would afford so suitable a text: nor to inquire how far the expression "*not with gold and pearls,*" &c. may be supposed to imply a direct prohibition of a showy style of attire. That they condemn that excessive attention paid to appearance which so greatly prevails among professing Christians, cannot, how-



ever, be doubted. But our present purpose is to recommend "that inward adorning of the mind," which is here described. Indeed, there is little fear, that they who eminently shine with these internal graces, will be prone to excess in external decoration. Humility, whose chief characteristic it is to be contented to pass without attracting observation, will surely, seldom be found excessively arrayed in those ornaments which expressly invite it. There may be some, however, who, though not destitute of this Christian grace, yet conform too much to the customs of those around them, merely from the want of a due consideration of the subject.

"Be ye clothed with humility." There is grace in the very word; an attraction, which they who feel not, must be as destitute of true taste as of right principle. There is no age to which it does not belong; but to the young, how eminently becoming! Humility is the very foundation of Christianity; we must be abased, before we can be exalted; and our highest exaltation must, at last, consist in the depth of our humiliation. He who is the "High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," exhibited, during the whole period of his abode on earth, a perfect pattern of this virtue. He not only "was found in fashion as a man," but "took upon him the form of a servant;" and let us remember, that he set us this example in order "that we might

follow his steps." When we are conscious of the swellings of pride, or the risings of vanity, let us think of the Lord Jesus Christ,—endeavour to realize his appearance, his manner, and to ascertain what conduct or feelings he would display or recommend on the present occasion. Above all, let us remember,—however we may imagine the secret workings of our vain hearts to be concealed from those around us, (though even this is rarely the case,) that His eye beholds them all, and with what sentiments we are fully informed; "The Lord resisteth the proud;" "the proud He knoweth afar off."

Be ye *clothed* with humility: there is a peculiar beauty in this figure. It is to cover us completely, like a garment, and without it we must never appear. This simple attire need fear no injury. A person walking the streets in delicate and costly clothing, is perpetually in danger of its being soiled and torn; while another, in plain garments, may go about without fear of inconvenience from the common accidents to which he is exposed. So a vain, showy mind is continually exposed to pain and mortification, from which one of a humble unassuming temper is perfectly secure. The freedom, ease, and tranquillity he enjoys can, indeed, scarcely be conceived of by those of an opposite spirit. And the garments of humility are armour as well as

clothing. They form an invulnerable covering, which malice itself cannot penetrate.

“He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low no pride ;  
He that is humble ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.”

Bunyan's shepherd boy sang sweetly when he sang thus.

And what is this ornament on which we ought to set so high a value?—A meek and quiet spirit. O, what a different world ours would be, if this heavenly jewellery were to become fashionable! but alas! how rarely do we see it worn! we hear much outcry of wrong, insult, ingratitude. The peace of every private circle is interrupted, more or less, by some petty contention. And here is a simple means which would heal every breach, calm every storm, allay every irritation. There is a certain temper called *spirit* in some young people, which is altogether opposed to meekness and quietness. The very terms, indeed, would probably excite in them a smile of contempt. But this would only prove them to be unacquainted with the nature of true dignity and real manliness. That the most perfect dignity of character and manner is consistent with these virtues was eminently manifested in Him who was, beyond all

others, "meek and lowly in heart." That *spirit* which is by some so greatly admired, would upon investigation, be found to be made up of the most mean and pitiful qualities, and to proceed from a contemptible species of vanity. But, can it be necessary to insist on the excellence of those tempers which the Bible itself recommends? Can that be mean, unmanly, or of small value, which, in the sight of God, is of great price!

Every word of God is true. It is therefore true, however reluctantly we may be disposed to admit it, that even a child, who subdues a rising fit of passion, or submits patiently to some little grievance that he felt disposed to resist, is "greater than he that taketh a city."

Do we need other inducements to cultivate this temper? Let us make the trial for one day; let us be peaceable, meek, forbearing, submissive; determining not to be provoked by provocation; and remark, if that day will not be more productive of happiness to ourselves, as well as to all around us, than another in which rights have been maintained, privileges asserted, insults returned, and wrongs, ever so successfully, revenged. This, indeed, must be the case, because holiness and happiness, our duty and our interest, are inseparably connected.

Let our young readers then, while they wisely repress that inordinate attention to external deco-

ration which so generally prevails, be ambitious to win and wear this choice array, these precious ornaments. Let them "learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and they shall find peace in their consciences, and rest to their souls."

## VI.

### LUCY'S WISHES.

LUCY had been standing one afternoon for nearly an hour at the parlour window, watching the carriages and passengers in the street. Idleness ever begets discontent: but instead of laying the blame upon herself, she felt disposed to complain of her condition. Almost every stranger that passed, she concluded was in happier circumstances than herself. She observed stages and carriages of various kinds, driving up to the great inn on the other side of the way. She watched the passengers as they alighted and set off again; wondered who they were, whence they came, whither they were going, and envied them because they were not staying at home. A travelling chaise, with ladies in pretty riding dresses, stopped to change horses. Ah, thought she, how happy they are!

going some delightful journey—hundreds of miles perhaps, and to see thousands of curiosities: or to live at some elegant country seat: at any rate they are not staying at home like me. How long have I been confined to this dull town, and this one house! She then cast a forlorn glance around the room, every object of which had been familiar to her from her infancy. Then looking over to her opposite neighbours, she saw a blazing fire, and the family seated round it. How comfortable they are! thought she; so cheerful, so sociable: telling some interesting story, perhaps: not all alone in a dull room like me!

When it grew too dark to see distinctly what was passing in the street, Lucy slowly moved from the window, and seated herself by the fire: where, fixing her eyes upon the red cinders, she fell into a deep reverie; and began to consider what situation she would choose for herself, if she might but change her condition. Her imagination still followed the travelling party she had seen stop at the inn; and she first thought she should like to be a companion to those ladies; to read to them, walk with them, and attend them wherever they went. “But how foolish!” thought she; “while I am wishing, why not wish myself one of the ladies themselves?—Yes, yes, a rich heiress, very handsome, fortune at my own disposal; a thousand a year—no, five;—or suppose ten thou-

sand a year. Should my father and mother be alive?—perhaps they would not allow me to travel and do as I pleased;—so they should have been dead some years, and I would have a very agreeable young person for a companion. But poor papa and mamma!" thought Lucy, "no no, they should not be dead then; but still I should have the fortune in my own hands, and do just what I pleased with it. And I would be an only child, and not have any brothers or sisters to teaze me." She next proceeded to settle the number of her servants, the colour of her carriages and liveries; in what counties she would have her country seats, and in what square her town house; till the number of her wants, and the splendor of her establishments, increased so surprisingly, that she began to fear her means would be insufficient, and she found it expedient at once to increase her income from ten to twenty thousand a year.

Just as Lucy had arrived at this conclusion, her mother entered the room, and put a stop to her meditations. She was beginning to converse with her daughter about the book they had been reading together in the morning: but Lucy, finding that subject very dry in comparison with her late brilliant speculations, soon interrupted it, by relating as much as she thought proper of what had been just passing in her mind. Her mother, when she had finished, endeavoured to prove that she

would probably not be at all happier for such a change of circumstances. Lucy knew not what to say to her representations; yet she did not feel convinced, and said, "Well, then, mamma, if wishing were of any use, and if you were exactly in my place, what would *you* wish for?—What is the happiest situation in all the world that you can think of?"

"If wishing were of any use then," said her mother, "I might, in the first place, wish to be about that age when the dangers of infancy and the follies of childhood are past; but when the opportunities and advantages of youth are yet to come. I would not wish to be grown up, because then the character is fixed; and I should lose the unspeakable advantage of having it yet in my power to form a good one. I might also wish for a sound, vigorous constitution. With regard to personal beauty, as there are some disadvantages connected with it, and as many who do not possess it make greater proficiency in the things most important to happiness than those who do, I would not wish about it; but make up my mind to be contented with whatever external appearance I happened to have. I should certainly wish to have kind parents; not such as would indulge my follies and spoil my temper; but parents able and willing to train me up in the way I should go, to impart useful instruction, and correct my perverse



dispositions. I would also wish for brothers and sisters, some of them nearly of my own age; as it would not only render my life more social and cheerful, but give me an opportunity of cultivating amiable and generous feelings, instead of growing selfish and self-important, as is sometimes the case with an only child. I might further wish my parents to be in easy circumstances, such as would allow them to give me a good, useful education, to supply my common wants, and to afford me a few rational pleasures: but I would by no means wish to be very rich, nor in the highest ranks of society, because it is universally allowed by men of the greatest wisdom and experience, that persons in the middle ranks of life are the most advantageously circumstanced for the attainment of virtue and happiness. Nor would I by any means wish for a fortune in my own hands till I was well qualified to manage it: for there cannot be a greater misfortune than for a person to be left to their own guidance at the early age we are supposing. I would only wish, therefore, for a moderate allowance from my parents, such as would enable me to indulge a few reasonable wishes, and that I might have a mite of my *own* to give to the poor, and to contribute towards some of the institutions for doing good to my fellow creatures. In addition to all this, I might, if it were, worth while, wish to live in an agreeable neigh-

bourhood, where there were a few young people of my own age and rank, with whom I might occasionally associate. I might also desire to live in a pleasant convenient house, with a garden; perhaps I might wish my parents to allow me a little garden of my own, to cultivate at my leisure hours; and that my own room should be furnished with a suitable library, and other means of instruction and amusement; and I would have regular hours for business and recreation."

"O how delightful!" exclaimed Lucy; "I can fancy exactly what kind of a house and garden it is, and what kind of people they are. I think you are a very good wisher indeed: now that is exactly what I should like."

"Indeed!" said her mother; "and who do you think is the fortunate young person I have been thinking of all the time, with whom you would so much like to change places?"

Lucy thought for a moment, and then exclaimed, "O mamma! you have been playing me a trick. You have been thinking of me, I do believe! Yes, for I am just the age that you said; and I have kind parents to instruct me, and they are not very rich; and I have brothers and sisters of my own age to associate with, and a few young friends besides; and I have an allowance to do what I please with; and I am not very handsome; and I live in a convenient house, tolerably pleasant, with a

garden, and have a garden and room of my own, and books and globes:—dear, how foolish I was not to find it out at first! Well, but how is it then that I am not as happy as I thought I should be with all those things? Why was I so dull and uncomfortable this afternoon, that I thought every body better off than myself?”

“I’ll tell you the reason, my dear,” replied her mother; “we have still left something out. The situation I have described, and in which precisely you yourself are placed, is certainly, as far as outward things can go, one of the happiest in the world; and in such a world as this, a change for you would almost certainly be for the worse: but then we must remember, that no situation, no possible combination of circumstances, can make us perfectly happy in this world, because it is a sinful world. When we fancy others better off than ourselves, it is only because we know our own circumstances, but do not know theirs. Those ladies whom you imagined to be so happy only because they were travelling, and wore pretty riding dresses, have, very probably, some outward trial, or some secret uneasiness, which makes them less so than you. But besides this, there are, as I said, some things which we have forgotten to include in our list of desirables; and they possess this great advantage above all the rest, that if we wish for them aright, wishing will not be vain. I would

therefore, in addition to all we have mentioned, wish for an amiable, obliging disposition ; a cheerful, open temper ; a peaceable and contented spirit. I would wish also, for industry and activity, which are the best securities against languor and discontent ; and without which, no circumstances can make us happy. Above all, I would desire a good conscience, and a heart right towards God. These are things, my dear Lucy, which, if we wish for, not feebly and lazily, but seriously and earnestly, may certainly be obtained.—With these, in any circumstances, we shall be happy ; and without them, we should not be contented, even with twenty thousand a year !”

## VII.

### THE USE OF BIOGRAPHY.

· THAT “what man has done man may do,” is a most stimulating and encouraging truth. It is this consideration chiefly, that renders the lives of individuals who have distinguished themselves in their day and generation so interesting to their fellow-creatures : and it is a remark which should

be borne in mind, whether we are studying the actions of *great good men*, or of *clever bad men*. In the former case, we should inquire whether we are not possessed of the same qualities, powers, and opportunities, (generally speaking) with which they were favoured; and in the latter, that we partake of the same depraved nature, and are liable to the same temptations that led them astray. It is not the history of other beings,—of those above or below us in the scale of intelligence; it is neither of angels nor brutes, but of men like ourselves that we read.

It is a common remark, that biography is one of the most useful studies to which we can apply; but we must remember, that its usefulness, to us, entirely depends upon our right application of it. It is idle indeed, to take up a book of any kind, merely with a view to entertainment: we hope our readers are all of them, by this time, above so childish a practice: but it is possible to read with a general desire to derive benefit, and yet without that close, personal application of it to ourselves, which alone is likely to do us good. We would therefore recommend, especially to the reader of biography, to keep one grand object in view; and to make this close inquiry whenever such a volume is opened—In what respects is this applicable to me?—How can I make it subservient to my own improvement? We shall endeavour to offer some

suggestions that may assist the reader in this inquiry.

Suppose that a young person in the quiet and humble walks of life should meet with the annals of some great warrior or statesman;—he would probably say, “This is nothing to me, except as mere amusement; I have no ambition, at least I have no talents or opportunities to distinguish myself in public life; I am quite contented with my humble lot; I seek not great things for myself.” Herein, indeed, he would shew his wisdom; and yet it might not be true that such a history was nothing to him. Whatever is in itself excellent, is worthy of our attention, and more or less of our imitation, however widely our circumstances may differ. Great talents and splendid achievements are necessarily confined to a few; and as we may be virtuous and happy without them, this is not to be regretted: but it is the duty and interest of every individual to aim at excellence, in his own sphere, however humble: and while it may be the farthest from our wishes or our duty to engage in public services, it may still be highly to our advantage to trace the steps, and to mark the progress, by which great men have arrived at eminence. Many of the very same qualities are requisite to make a good tradesman, or skilful mechanic, which are needed to form a great statesman or general.

We shall probably find that such a man was early

distinguished from the frivolous or dissolute around him by devotedness to his object: that he made it his study, his pleasure; not merely engaging in it as a matter of course, or of necessity. We shall find that he was not discouraged by difficulties, but rather stimulated by them to more vigorous efforts; that he never consulted his own ease or gratification, when they stood in the way of his grand design: that he was characterized by a disregard to trifles of all sorts, and by a steady aim at the most important ends. Now as these, among other good qualities, ensured to him success and distinction, so we may be assured that the same causes will produce the same effects, in whatever situations they are applied. Thus far a little apprentice-boy may learn of Peter the Great; and become, by and by, as distinguished in his trade as the Czar was in his empire.

When we read the lives of distinguished persons, we are generally struck with the lamentable mixture of mean qualities and bad actions which sullied the glory of their highest achievements. In the whole history of mankind, there are but a very few exceptions to this remark. From which we may learn, not to envy that eminence of rank or talent, which so peculiarly exposes to temptation. At the same time it should make us watchful of ourselves; since, if men thus eminently gifted, and possessed of such gigantic powers, had not wisdom sufficient to govern their passions, nor strength to resist temptation,

what need must there be for us to guard against the danger! For although it frequently appears that clever men are wicked men, it by no means follows that to be wicked one must needs be clever; on the contrary it is often seen that persons of the weakest intellect sink into the lowest degrees of vice.

From the lives of distinguished bad men, we may see the small value, in themselves, of those shining qualities which dazzle mankind. What is genius without virtue!—it is but a splendid curse; proving still more baleful to the individual himself, than to those within the sphere of his influence. But in tracing the career of men distinguished alike by their talents and their vices, it is especially profitable to observe the gradual steps by which they arrived at the height, or rather the depth of their notoriety. There was a time when Nero appeared amiable and humane. Let us not, therefore, conclude, that we shall never be guilty of a crime, because we now shrink from the thought of it; but rather, if we find that we have not resolution to resist the small temptations of the present moment, let us remember that we are in the high road to vice, although as yet but at its commencement. It is presumption and ignorance of ourselves to imagine, that the power of resistance will increase with the strength of temptation. By such self deception some once promising characters have become the



tyrants and scourges of society: from their examples we should learn, "when we think we stand, to take heed lest we fall."

But if so much improvement may be derived from the history of bad men, and of others who have eminently possessed "the wisdom of this world," how much more profitable must it be to study the lives of those who became "wise unto salvation"—who were good and great in the truest sense of the words? Our libraries are richly furnished with such profitable records; and the young reader is amply supplied with animating accounts of those of his own age, who had the courage to "come out and be separate" from a vain world. But are we not too apt to read the lives of eminent Christians with the same feeling of *distance*, as those of heroes and philosophers? as though the higher attainments of holiness were as much beyond our reach as the gifts of genius. This is a common, but lamentable mistake, proceeding not from humility, but indolence. Although perseverance and industry will in a great degree supply the want of great abilities, yet genius, it must be acknowledged, is so far a gift of nature, that it cannot be acquired by our own endeavours; but this is not the case with regard to "the wisdom which is from above." Hence Christian biography is all *encouragement*; and it is only sinful sloth which tempts us to say, "I can never hope to make such attainments in religion as others." Here am-

bition is sanctified; and here to be contented with mediocrity is dangerous indeed. By what means does it appear, that these "burning and shining lights" arrived at such eminence in their profession? were they not such as are in the power of every reader, however humble in station, mean in intellect, or young in years?—is it not invariably by watchfulness and diligence, by self denial, fervent prayer, and giving up the world;—in other words, by being deeply in earnest in religion, that these "best gifts" are attained? Let us not then merely envy the attainments of those we read of, but with a holy ambition resolve to emulate their graces. There is no obstacle in the way but our own unwillingness. It is true that, like every other good, this degree of growth in grace must be given from above; but this surely is not a hinderance, but the highest possible advantage. "He giveth more grace" to those who desire more; and they who ask "will assuredly receive." To young readers, the encouragements and inducements are especially great: because their course is but beginning, and it is yet for them to determine in what way to direct it; now they may either become like stars of the first magnitude, or sink to the level of those common, careless, doubtful characters, who live in worldliness, and die without comfort.

Closely connected with this subject, is that department of religious reading, which has proved

very edifying to many, and with which our young readers are frequently presented; we refer to obituaries. In reading the *lives* of individuals, we observe various situations wherein they are placed, in which it is highly improbable we shall ever follow them. But in accounts of the *deaths* of our fellow creatures, we are intimately interested; since it is a scene through which we must certainly ourselves pass: and to read such records without a deep, thoughtful impression of that fact is folly indeed.—We too, must die; and as we know not how soon, it behoves us immediately to inquire what reason there is to suppose that we should enjoy the same tranquillity and hope on a dying pillow, as we frequently read of. The agonizing doubts of a death-bed repentance, call loudly to those yet in health to “remember their Creator before those evil days come.” While the cheerful hope of those whose youthful and healthful days were devoted to him;—whom sickness and death found “watching,” should stimulate us to “be also ready;” especially as the many early deaths that are continually recorded, prove, that we know not at what hour the angel of death may come; with some it is “at cock-crowing and in the morning.”

## VIII.

### EVERY MAN HIS OWN FORTUNE TELLER.

THERE is a strong propensity in the human mind to look forward to distant years, and to penetrate the secrets of futurity. This desire in the minds of the vulgar and ignorant, has given rise to the foolish and wicked practice of consulting pretended fortune-tellers. In these enlightened days, I have little fear that any of my readers should wish to have recourse to such absurd and sinful means of information; and yet as it is very likely they may sometimes feel curiosity respecting their future destiny, they will I hope listen to the plan I have to propose; which, without incurring either guilt or disgrace, will enable them, each for himself, to foretel with considerable accuracy, what they may have to expect in future life.

To prevent disappointment, I here candidly confess, that I do not pretend to enable them to divine the amount of their fortunes—what connections they may form—in what parts they may reside—nor at what period they will die: nor do I regret this; nor need they; since these are circumstances which it is better for us not to know beforehand; but, with

regard to things of still greater importance than these, such as the degree of success and of happiness they may reasonably expect in their undertakings and situations in the world, they will find the proposed method may be depended on.

I shall, then, suppose myself to be consulted by a number of young persons, wishing to be initiated in my secret; but they will not find me commencing my instructions with any mystical ceremony, nor pronouncing any unintelligible charm. I do not even wish to examine the palms of their hands; although I may perhaps take the liberty to notice the expression of their faces: all I require is, some insight into their present characters and past conduct.

Suppose one of them, for instance, should appear to be a lad of an indolent inactive disposition; to whom exertion, whether of body or mind, was always irksome and burdensome, performed as a task, and by compulsion; he is looking forward anxiously to the time when coercion will cease, and when he shall be free from the necessity of exertion. —In this case, I do not hesitate to shake my knowing head, and in the technical language of my profession to pronounce *bad luck to him*. I need not ask, nor can I guess, what may be his line of business, nor what the extent of his capital; but I can foretel, with great confidence, that he will be neither successful, respectable, nor happy. That when

restraints are removed, and he is thrown upon himself, life will be burdensome to him; and that it will, very probably, end in poverty and disgrace.

I shall suppose my next applicant to be a gay young lady, desirous of knowing how soon she shall be her own mistress, and how large her fortune will be; as she is in want of a thousand things that she is not allowed to purchase: she is very fond of jewels and laces, and of all that is showy and expensive; and wishes extremely to be able to gratify her desires. Here again, I could augur no good; so many husbands and fathers have been ruined by expensive wives and daughters, for, "as poor Richard says, silks and satins put out the kitchen fire," that what could I see in her destiny but bills and bailiffs, a husband in prison, children in want, and herself in indigence?

Another approaches with his pockets stuffed with gingerbread, and his hands full of macaroons; he professes himself to be so fond of good things that he spends the greater part of his pocket money at the pastry-cook's; his parents allow him to partake of every dish that comes on table, and to stuff as long as he pleases; and he owns that he considers dinner-time the best part of the day. I need not feel this young gentleman's pulse in order to predict to him an impaired constitution, and an early decay of his mental powers. Complicated disease, and

premature old age are the invariable rewards of indulgence. These habits will increase with his years : a listless, burdensome life, and early death is his probable destiny.

The next applicant appears with a frowning brow, and a discontented, clouded aspect : his temper is sullen and obstinate, or fretful and irritable : he wishes to know if any thing agreeable will ever befall him, for at present he has known only unhappiness. Alas ! nothing but unhappiness can I predict to him. He may grow rich and prosper in the world, but he will ever “ dwell in *Meshech* ;” his family will dread, and his neighbours dislike him ; and his gold, if he has it, will never purchase that ease and content which is the reward of good nature only.

Another inquirer I shall suppose to be an undutiful son, who has ever rewarded his parents’ care and kindness with neglect, disrespect and disobedience. Now on this case, I can pronounce with a greater degree of certainty than on any of the preceding. Some faults never appear to meet their proper punishment in this world ; but it is a common remark, founded on long observation, that unkindness to parents, above all other crimes, reaps its reward even here. This youth then, if he becomes a parent, will be taught by refractory, rebellious children the anguish he has inflicted on his own parent. A rebellious son, an ungrateful daughter,

must expect in due time to become an unhappy father, or despised mother.

Another informs me he has had a religious education, and that he is in a great degree aware of the importance of religion, and of the value of his soul ; moreover, he intends before long to give it the attention it demands ; but hitherto he has delayed to do so, from time to time, hoping it would be less difficult at some future period than it appears now ; so that, at present, he is as far from being truly religious, as he was when first he began to think upon the subject. Now it requires little sagacity to foresee the probable consequences of this temper. I solemnly warn him that the same indisposition that has hitherto prevailed, will, unless strongly counteracted, continue and increase ; while he is intending and purposing, his heart will grow harder and harder, untill it will finally be said of him, “ Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground ? ”

I fear I shall be regarded as a gloomy prognosticator ; but I dare not depart from the rules of my art, which are founded on universal experience, and on the established laws of cause and effect. However, lest I be thought too discouraging, I am happy to proclaim, that these destinies are, by no means, at present, to be considered as unchangeable. On the contrary, if the indolent should be roused by a dread of the consequences awaiting his disposition, to become active and industrious—the extravagant,



moderate and frugal—the indulgent, self-denying and abstemious—the ill-tempered, mild and amiable—the undutiful, affectionate and tractable—and if the procrastinator resolve at once, that he will serve the Lord—then, it is obvious, that all my dark predictions will be immediately reversed.

For instance; let us suppose an inquirer of a different description to any of the foregoing. A modest, ingenuous youth now approaches, wishing to know what encouragement he may expect in his exertions. He confesses that he is not gifted with superior talents, and therefore does not hope to arrive at any distinguished eminence. It appears, however, that he early acquired habits of attention and industry; that he has courage and perseverance to press forward in his undertakings, in spite of difficulties, till he has conquered them; that although his real wants are amply supplied, he has been trained in frugality and self-denial; therefore his wishes are few and moderate, so that he has always his mite to spare for the poor and the destitute. He cannot boast of rich or powerful patrons, but his temper is sweet, and his manners obliging, by which he obtains the good-will of his neighbours; moreover, he is a good son and a kind brother; and having been taught that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” he has already found “His ways to be pleasantness, and his paths peace.” Now, without presuming to guess whether this will be a

rich man, I hesitate not to pronounce him a happy one: he may encounter difficulties, and pass through trials, but "his bread will be given him, and his water will be sure;" especially "that bread which he casts upon the waters will return" to him, when it is wanted, though "after many days." It is besides this, more than probable, that he will eventually be successful even in his temporal affairs; that he will be "blessed in his basket and his store;" rear an affectionate family; be beloved by his friends, and respected by all; finally, he will die in peace, and at last "enter into the joy of his Lord."

It is not unusual for fortune-tellers to predict the day of death; and although, as I said, I make no such pretensions, it may yet be expected that I should not be totally silent on the subject. And while they who presume to do so are miserable deceivers, I can with the most absolute certainty foretel what it is much more important to know, namely, that "it is appointed unto all men once to die;" the day and hour is indeed unknown; and yet each one may, for himself, look forward to a period not very distant, when he may be quite certain that he shall have reached his "long home." To know that we must die one day, is a far more interesting fact, than to know *what* day; and this is a circumstance which, surely, we may all foretel for ourselves.

Is it not strange, that the grandest event of our existence—that part of our fortunes which it is of infinitely greater consequence we should foreknow than whether we are to be princes or beggars—we should so seldom inquire about, although it is more easily ascertained than any question respecting our temporal affairs? I mean, whether we are going to heaven or hell? Now, to know this, we have only to ask whether or not we are Christians: if conscience allows us humbly to hope that we are so, in the scriptural sense of the word, then we are sure that the Lord is gone “to prepare a place for us” among the “many mansions in his father’s house.” But if we know that we are not true Christians, nor earnestly striving to become such, then, the awful probability is, that we are doomed to the place “prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Thus, having explained and exemplified my method, so as to render it clear to their comprehensions, I trust that every one of my readers will be able to predict all that is good for them to know concerning their future lives; and I doubt not they will find it profitable to do so. Should any think it an unsatisfactory and uncertain plan, or flatter themselves, that although they may answer some of the above descriptions, yet, that they shall escape the appropriate punishment, I must tell them that it is for want of knowing the world and themselves,

and for want of considering the natural and inevitable consequences of things.

A new year is now commencing, let every one inquire how they have begun it. Is it with a resolution to make renewed efforts to overcome their bad habits, and to improve their manners and characters? and have they actually begun to make such efforts? then I prophesy a happy new year to them; and that if they persevere in their resolutions, it will be the happiest they have ever known: but if on the contrary they are beginning it in the old way—not more attentive to business, nor watchful of their tempers and conduct—not more concerned for their intellectual and religious improvement than heretofore; then, although they may very likely have had a merry Christmas, I cannot wish them a happy new year, because I know it would be in vain to do so. For the saying is as true as it is trite, that to be happy we must be good. The knowledge of this, is, in fact, the grand secret of my art; and it is by consulting this simple rule, that *every man may be his own fortune-teller.*

## IX.

### ON IMPRESSIONS.

THEODORE, in high health and spirits, was engaged in boyish sports with his companions, when he was summoned to attend the death bed of a favourite friend, a lad of his own age, who had been, from his infancy, his intimate associate. He was suddenly seized with an acute disease; and, in a few hours, all hope of recovery being over, he expressed a wish to take a last leave of his friend Theodore.

Theodore entered the darkened chamber with a trembling step; and with mingled feelings of awe, grief, and terror, approached the bed of death. The curtain was undrawn, and when he beheld the altered countenance, and heard the feeble accents of his dying companion, this, thought he, is a scene I shall never, never forget! His friend's failing strength allowed him to speak but a few words; but they were words of high import. "Theodore," he said, "a very little time ago I was strong and well, as you are; now I am dying! Oh, that my short life had been better improved! Oh, that I had thought more of eternity, and been better pre-

pared for it! I cannot say all I would: but learn from me, how uncertain life is, and remember that religion is ‘the one thing needful!’” Theodore groaned and wept; kissed his friend’s ghastly cheek, and retired in the deepest sorrow.

In a few hours he heard that he was no more: his tears flowed afresh; he thought again, and again, of his dying words, and was persuaded that they would never be forgotten. He went afterwards to take a last look at his beloved companion. With what feelings did he enter the gloomy apartment! he shrunk back as he approached the place where the coffin stood, and felt inexpressibly shocked at the sight of its bright, mournful ornaments. When the white napkin that covered the well-known face was removed, he started, and feared to trust his eyes to gaze upon it. Ah! how lately had he seen that pale countenance warm, ruddy, and sparkling with mirth and happiness. Theodore returned slowly home, viewing every object in a new light; the impressions he felt of the uncertainty of life—the reality of death—the value of religion, were strong and lively. He attended his friend’s funeral; arrayed in deep mourning he followed in the slow train; stood on the verge of the deep, dark grave; witnessed the last rite; and retired sorrowful and serious. The next day, and the next, the thoughts of this mournful event never left him for a moment; and for many days he was

more than usually serious, thoughtful, and attentive. He retired morning and evening to pray and to read the Bible. He joined in all the religious duties of the family without suffering wandering thoughts to intrude. The following Sabbath did not seem "a weariness" to him: he was glad to have his attention called to those things which he felt to be of supreme importance. But at length, returning to his ordinary occupations and amusements, his spirits revived, and with that his former feelings began to return: every day rendered his late impressions fainter; every time they returned it was with decreased force, and it was not long ere he was in much about the same state of mind as before the event happened.

One day Theodore met with the interesting memoirs of a young man who had early distinguished himself by his attainments in science and literature. He read with avidity; and as he read, his ambition was roused, his enthusiasm kindled: he remarked by what means he had risen to eminence, by what industry, perseverance, and self-denial, he had conquered all difficulties: and Theodore determined no longer to be contented with performing the common daily drudgery of an ordinary school-boy, but thence-forward to make similar exertions, in the hope of similar success. Accordingly, the next day, he arose betimes, surprised his masters by his extraordinary diligence, and applied to his studies

even during the intervals usually devoted to recreation. This continued, with small abatement, for a few days: but then his energy began to relax; he yielded to this and the other excuse; forgot the book that had stimulated him; and was soon just about as studious as before he read it.

Although Theodore was by no means an undutiful son, yet there were times, when, if his parents thwarted his wishes, he would put on a sullen look, and give a short answer. At length his mother was laid on a bed of sickness; she became so extremely ill, that they feared she would not recover: and now he was in the deepest distress: he knelt by her bed-side; lamented in bitterness, that he had ever spoken an unkind word to her; and resolved, and promised, that if she did but recover, she should never have to complain of it again. At last she began to amend. Theodore was rejoiced; he attended her with the greatest tenderness, and flew to execute all her commands. And yet, when she was quite well, the very first time that she had occasion to reprove him, he returned her a frowning look, and sullen answer.

Once, in walking out with his father, he was taken into a wretched cottage, where a poor sick man and ten small children were without bread. They were half naked, and seemed perishing for want of food and fire. Theodore's heart yearned at the sight: the eldest was a lad of his own size;



but what a difference! as he stood beside him, and compared his own comfortable dress—his bright boots, warm great-coat, and neat appearance, with that poor shivering lad's ragged jacket, and bare feet, he felt ashamed of having squandered many an idle shilling, that would have done so much good here, on trifling gratifications for himself. "And there are thousands," thought he, "besides these, enduring the same want and hardship." He immediately emptied his pockets for their relief; and when he returned home to a blazing fire and good dinner, he hoped he should never again be unmindful of the miseries of the poor. But amid other scenes, the wretched cottage was soon forgotten; and his next month's allowance was spent as it had usually been.

It was the Sunday after new-year's day: and Theodore went in the evening, with his brothers and sisters, to hear a sermon to young people. The text was, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." The minister spoke in a very impressive, affectionate manner; he made the most searching address to their consciences,—the most lively appeal to their feelings. The place was crowded; the prayers, the hymns were suitable and affecting; attention was excited; tears were shed; and Theodore's flowed among the rest. The service closed, and he secretly exclaimed, "The Lord shall be the guide of my youth, and my portion for ever."

He returned home; wept, prayed; called to mind his conduct in the past year; how his resolutions had failed; how impressions had worn off: he thought again of his deceased friend; and felt thankful that, although a cumberer of the ground, he had been spared yet another year. He thought of "the sins and follies of his childhood and youth:" then of the swift passage of life; how short a time it seemed since the last new year; and how one after another would thus pass away, and bring him certainly and soon to the end of life; "Let me then redeem the precious time," said Theodore, "now, before those evil days come! Let me begin this new year well; let it be spent better than the last!" Thus he retired to rest in a serious spirit.

He arose briskly the next day. It was a fine, bright, cheerful Monday morning, and Theodore, in high spirits, ran off to skate on the river. Thus the morning was spent, and in the evening he went to meet a large party of young people. Several days passed in similar diversions, till, by the time he returned to his usual pursuits, when he thought to have put his good resolutions in practice, he had almost forgotten that it was a new year. There was nothing that made it appear to differ from the old one: things therefore went on with Theodore much as usual; nor does it seem very probable that the present year will afford him less painful reflections than the last.

Now, should any reader be surprised at this recital, and consider it as an extraordinary instance of levity and thoughtlessness, we would request him to pause for a moment; to examine his own heart; and to recollect his own experience. To whom have not some similar events occurred? On whom have not similar impressions been made? Few are so young, but that they also have been alarmed by the death of some associate; few so insensible, as not to have felt it as a solemn warning. Who among them has not been stimulated, at times, to unusual exertion in their pursuits, by the animating example of others; or by some quickening motive? Have not many of them, upon the sickness or death of some dear relation, felt the pangs of remorse at not having fulfilled "the law of kindness" towards them? Who has not felt occasional self-reproach when witnessing the sufferings of the poor, and formed fresh resolutions to assist them? Who, on those returning seasons, which more particularly remind us of the flight of time, and of the brevity of life, has not resolved to commence a new course, and to walk thence-forward in the pleasant and peaceful paths of heavenly wisdom? And oh! which of our readers has not many, many a time, felt lively convictions under the preaching of faithful ministers, and felt their word to be "quick and powerful?" But have these impressions, in every instance, been lasting? This is the question which

each must answer satisfactorily for himself, before he should cast one stone of censure at Theodore. Alas ! how many *Monday mornings* witness such fading impressions ! How often does it happen that before the grass begins to spring—before a single flower blooms on the grave where we wept and resolved, that the eye that wept, and the heart that promised, are again fixed upon a vain world !

But now, let us inquire, why is it so ? At the distance of two or three months from some painful bereavement, some solemn warning, are those considerations which then so deeply impressed us less true, less momentous ? No : while “the cares and the pleasures of this life” spring up like weeds, and cause those impressions to die away, all these great realities remain unchanged. There lie the dead in their silent graves ! Their spirits, whose flight we at first attempted, in thought, to pursue, still exist in that unknown world :—at this—at every moment—whatever trifle is engaging us, they, at the same instant, are feeling, thinking—conscious either of unspeakable pleasure, or inconceivable regret. We may be trifling, we may be running into temptation, and eager in the pursuit of sin ; but, in the meantime, it is as true as when we are most disposed to remember it, that, “There is a heaven above, and that, “There is a dreadful hell.”

Our Bible may remain unopened for days, for weeks ; but during those days and weeks, the words

therein written are as true, as important, as when we are reading them attentively. Let it be but opened, and at all times we shall meet the reproof, the exhortation, the promise. The Bible never ceases to say, (whether we hear or forbear,) "What will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And thus, every motive that urges us to what is right, remains, in itself, equally forcible and persuasive, when we have forgotten, as when we remember it.

Now, what is the course of wisdom? Are we, then, some may perhaps inquire, to feel habitually that gloom, and dread, and sorrow, which we experience when surrounding a death-bed, or are weeping over the grave? Are these impressions never to wear off? And is our return to the cheerful engagements of life, and of our age forbidden? It can scarcely be needful to reply, that this is not the lesson to be conveyed. Gloom and sorrow, will indeed, occasionally overwhelm the mind in this dying world; and the "house of mourning is better than the house of mirth;" yet melancholy is far from being the feeling natural to a good man. Cheerfulness and serenity in the diligent discharge of the duties of life, characterise the true Christian. But our moral is this, that wisdom consists in *being habitually influenced by those considerations which are more powerfully suggested on particular occasions.* If we feel in the chamber of sickness, and by the

side of the grave, that life is uncertain, death inevitable, and that heaven or hell must be our certain destination; let us ever after act upon that conviction. And let it be thus with every other impression that we know to be just. If our hearts have melted at the occasional sight of poverty and misery, let us not go away and forget that the destitute and the miserable are still suffering: "the poor ye have always with you;" let us then always remember them.

Consider what a happy state of energy and diligence, of zeal, and of charity, we should maintain, if the accumulated force of every motive, of every impression we have received, were constantly pressing upon our minds. The same sense of the value of life—the same motives to diligence and activity, to affection, and to benevolence, to the improvement of time, to the preparation for eternity. And then remember, that these inducements are, in themselves, every moment as strong, and the things to which they relate as true as if this were the case. We could not, indeed, constantly sustain so powerful a stimulus; but it is in our power always to recollect it. This is the use we should make of *impressions*.

New-year's day is now past: but is it therefore less important to redeem the time, and put our good resolutions in practice, than it was on that day? It is rather more so, because the year is now shortened by one considerable division of it. Let us then,

conscious of the weakness and the volatility of our hearts, and of the frailty of resolutions made in our own strength, look up to Him who, "to them who have no might," has promised to increase strength: who will, if implored, confirm our wavering minds, and establish our weak resolutions. Finally, may we be permitted to ask, has the perusal of this paper produced any *impression*? Has it, dear reader, called to your remembrance any seasons of seriousness and diligence, that have since passed away "like the early dew?" If so, endeavour and pray that it may not be so in this instance; resolve that this, at least, shall be a permanent IMPRESSION.

## X.

## THE LIFE OF A LOOKING-GLASS.

*To the Editor of the Youth's Magazine.*

SIR,

IT being very much the custom, as I am informed, even for obscure individuals to furnish some account of themselves, for the edification of the public, I hope I shall not be deemed impertinent for calling

your attention to a few particulars of my own history. I cannot, indeed, boast of any very extraordinary incidents; but having, during the course of a long life, had much leisure and opportunity for observation, and being naturally of a *reflecting* cast, I thought it might be in my power to offer some remarks that may not be wholly unprofitable to your readers.

My earliest recollection is that of a carver and gilder's workshop; where I remained for many months, leaning with my face to the wall; and having never known any livelier scene, I was very well contented with my quiet condition. The first object that I remember to have arrested my attention, was, what I now believe must have been a large spider, which, after a vast deal of scampering about, began, very deliberately, to weave a curious web all over my face. This afforded me great amusement: and not then knowing what far lovelier objects were destined to my gaze, I did not resent the indignity.

At length, when little dreaming of any change of fortune, I felt myself suddenly removed from my station; and immediately afterwards underwent a curious operation, which at the time gave me considerable apprehensions for my safety: but these were succeeded by pleasure, upon finding myself arrayed in a broad, black frame, handsomely carved and gilt; for you will please to observe, that the period of which I am now speaking was upwards of



fourscore years ago. This process being finished, I was presently placed, very carefully, in a large packing-case, and sent a long journey, by waggon, to London. That I may not be tedious, I will not here stay to relate the surprise and terror I endured during this transportation; nor the serious apprehensions I entertained that my delicate frame would never survive the jolts and jars it underwent in the course of it. Indeed, I have reason to believe that I was in imminent danger many times; not to mention the extreme darkness and dreariness of my situation. How sincerely did I then wish to be replaced in my old quiet corner; which appeared cheerful itself, compared with my present forlorn condition. So little are we capable of judging what circumstances will eventually prove most conducive to our happiness! At last, after many, to me, unintelligible movements, I found to my great joy that my prison was being unbarred. The cheerful light once again shone upon me; and a person, whom I afterwards found to be my new master's apprentice, (and with whom I soon became well acquainted,) lifted me carefully out. No sooner had he cleared away from my face the straw and paper with which I had been well nigh suffocated, than, as I observed, he gave me a very significant look; which, to confess the truth, I took, at the time, for a compliment to myself:—but I have since learnt to interpret such compliments more

truly. Striking, indeed, was the contrast between my late mode of life and that to which I was now introduced. My new situation was in the shop window, with my face to the street : which was one of the most public in London. Here my attention was at first quite distracted by the constant succession of objects that passed before me. But it was not long before I began to remark the considerable degree of attention I myself excited ; and how much I was distinguished, in this respect, from my neighbours, the other articles, in the shop-window. I observed that passengers, who appeared to be posting away upon urgent business, would often just turn and give me a friendly glance as they passed. But I was particularly gratified to observe, that while the old, the shabby, and the wretched, seldom took any notice of me, the young, the gay, and the handsome, generally paid me this compliment ; and that these good-looking people always seemed the best pleased with me ; which I attributed to their superior discernment. I well remember one young lady, who used to pass my master's shop regularly every morning in her way to school, and who never omitted to turn her head to look at me as she went by ; so that, at last, we became well acquainted with each other. I must confess, that at this period of life, I was in great danger of becoming insufferably vain, from the attentions that were then paid me ; and, perhaps, I am not the only individual to whom

a sudden removal from retirement to a more public mode of life, has proved a hazardous and trying event to the character: nor the only one who has formed mistaken notions as to the attentions they receive in society.

My vanity, however, received a considerable check from one circumstance; nearly all the goods by which I was surrounded in the shop window; though many of them much more homely in their structure, and humble in their destinations; were disposed of sooner than myself. I had the mortification of seeing one after another bargained for and sent away, while I remained, month after month, without a purchaser. At last, however, a gentleman and lady from the country, who had been standing some time in the street, inspecting, and, as I perceived, conversing about me, walked into the shop; and after some altercation with my master, agreed to purchase me: upon which I was once more packed up, and sent off on a longer journey than before. I was far less disconcerted, this time, by my unpleasant circumstances, than during my first journey; concluding they would terminate, as before, in a change for the better.—Another proof of our incompetence to judge of the real tendency of passing events. I was very curious, you may suppose, upon arriving at my new quarters, to see what kind of life I was likely to lead. I remained, however, some time unmolested in my packing case, and very *flat* I felt there. Upon

being, at last, unpacked, I found myself in the stone hall of a large, lone house in the country. My master and mistress, I soon learned, were new-married people, just setting up house-keeping; and I was intended to decorate their best parlour; to which I was presently conveyed; and after some little discussion between them in fixing my longitude and latitude, I was hung up opposite the fire-place, in an angle of ten degrees from the wall, according to the fashion of those times. I felt, at first, very well pleased with my new situation: and looked with complacency upon the various objects before me, which, like myself, were then new and handsome: but perhaps I should have experienced some dismay, if I could have known that I was destined to spend *fifty* years in that spot without undergoing any change myself, or witnessing any in the things that surrounded me, except, indeed, that imperceptibly produced by time.

Yes, there I hung, year after year, almost in perpetual solitude. My master and mistress were sober, regular, old-fashioned people; they saw no company except at fair time and Christmas day; on which occasions only, they occupied the best parlour. My countenance used to brighten up, when I saw the annual fire kindled in that ample grate; and when a cheerful circle of country cousins assembled round it. At those times, I always got a little notice from the young folks: but those festivities over, and I was

condemned to another half year of complete loneliness. How familiar to my recollection at this hour, is that large, old-fashioned parlour! I can remember, as well as if I had seen them but yesterday, the noble flowers on the crimson-damask chair-covers and window-curtains; and those curiously carved tables and chairs. I could describe every one of the stories on the Dutch tiles that surrounded the grate; the rich china ornaments on the wide mantelpiece; and the pattern of the paper-hangings, which consisted alternately of a parrot, a poppy, and a shepherdess—a parrot, a poppy, and a shepherdess. The room being so little used, the window-shutters were rarely opened, but there were three holes cut in each, in the shape of a heart, through which, day after day, and year after year, I used to watch the long, dim, dusty sun beams, streaming across the dark parlour. I should mention, however, that I seldom missed a short visit from my master and mistress on a Sunday morning, when they came down stairs, ready dressed for church. I can remember how my mistress used to trot in upon her high-heeled shoes, unfold a leaf of one of the shutters, then come and stand straight before me; then turn half round to the right and left; never failing to see if the corner of her well-starched handkerchief was pinned exactly in the middle. I think I can see her now, in her favourite dove-coloured lustring, (which she wore every Sunday in every summer for seven years

at the least,) and her long full ruffles, and worked apron. Then followed my good master ; who, though his visit was somewhat shorter, never failed to come and settle his Sunday wig before me.

Time rolled away : and my master and mistress, with all that appertained to them, insensibly suffered from its influence. When I first knew them, they were a young, blooming couple as you would wish to see : but I gradually perceived an alteration. My mistress began to stoop a little ; and my master got a cough, which troubled him, more or less, to the end of his days. At first, and for many years, my mistress's foot upon the stairs was light and nimble ; and she would come in as blythe and as brisk as a lark : but at last, it was a slow, heavy step ; and even my master's began to totter. And, in these respects, every thing else kept pace with them : the crimson damask that I remembered so fresh and bright, was now faded and worn ; the dark polished mahogany was, in some places, worm eaten ; the parrot's gay plumage on the walls grew dull ; and I myself, though long unconscious of it, partook of the universal decay. The dissipated taste I acquired, upon my first introduction to society, had long since subsided ; and the quiet, sombre life I led, gave me a grave, meditative turn. The change which I witnessed in all things around me, caused me to reflect much on their vanity : and when, upon the occasions before-mentioned, I used to see the

gay, blooming faces of the young, saluting me with so much complacency, I would fain have admonished them of the alteration they must soon undergo; and have told them how certainly their bloom, also, must fade away as a flower. But, alas! you know, Sir, looking-glasses can only *reflect*.

After I had remained in this condition, to the best of my knowledge, above five and forty years, I suddenly missed my poor old master: he came to visit me no more; and by the change in my mistress's apparel, I guessed what had happened. Five years more passed away; and then I saw no more of her! In a short time after this, several rude strangers entered my room: the long, rusty screw, which had held me up so many years, was drawn out; and I, together with all the goods and chattels in the house, was put up to auction, in that very apartment which I had so long peaceably occupied. I felt a good deal hurt at the very contemptuous terms in which I was spoken of by some of the bidders; for, as I said, I was not aware that I had become as old fashioned as my poor old master and mistress. At last I was knocked down for a trifling sum, and sent away to a very different destination.

Before going home to my new residence, I was sent to a workman to be refitted in a new gilt frame; which, although it completely modernized my appearance, I must confess, at first, set very uneasily upon me. And now, although it was not

till my old age, I for the first time became acquainted with my natural use, capacity, and importance. My new station was no other than the dressing room of a young lady, just come from school. Before I was well fixed in the destined spot, she came to survey me, and, with a look of such complacency and good will, as I had not seen for many a day. I was now presently initiated in all the mysteries of the toilet: O, what an endless variety of laces, jewels, silks, and ribbons; pins, combs, cushions, and curling-irons; washes, essences, powders, and patches, were daily spread before me! If I had been heretofore almost tired with the sight of my good old mistress's everlasting lustring, I really felt still more so with this profusion of ornament and preparation. I was, indeed, favoured with my fair mistress's constant attentions: they were so unremitting as perfectly to astonish me, after being so long accustomed to comparative neglect. Never did she enter her room, on the most hasty errand, without just vouchsafing me a kind glance; and at leisure hours I was indulged with much longer visits. Indeed, to confess the truth, I was sometimes quite surprised at their length; but I don't mean to tell tales. During the hour of dressing, when I was more professionally engaged with her, there was, I could perceive, nothing in the room—in the house—nay, I believe, nothing in the world, of so much importance in her estimation as



myself. But I have frequently remarked, with concern, the different aspect with which she would regard me at those times, and when she returned at night from the evening's engagements. However late it was, or however fatigued she might be, still I was sure of a greeting the moment she entered ; but instead of the bright, blooming face I had seen a few hours before, it was generally pale and haggard, and not unfrequently bearing a strong expression of disappointment or chagrin.

My mistress would frequently bring a crowd of her young companions into her apartment ; and it was amusing to see how they would each in turn come to pay their respects to me. What varied features and expressions in the course of a few minutes I had thus an opportunity of observing ! upon which I used to make my own quiet reflections.

In this manner I continued some years in the service of my mistress, without any material alteration taking place either in her or in me : but, at length, I began to perceive that her aspect towards me was considerably changed, especially when I compared it with my first recollections of her. She now appeared to regard me with somewhat less complacency ; and would frequently survey me with a mingled expression of displeasure and suspicion, as though some change had taken place in *me*, though I am sure it was no fault of mine ; indeed, I could never reflect upon myself for a moment : with regard

to my conduct towards any of my owners, I have ever been a faithful servant; nor have I once, in the course of my whole life, given a false answer to any one I have had to do with. I am, by nature, equally averse to flattery and detraction; and this I may say for myself, that I am incapable of misrepresentation. It was with mingled sensations of contempt and compassion, that I witnessed the efforts my mistress now made in endeavouring to force me to yield the same satisfaction to her as I had done upon our first acquaintance. Perhaps, in my confidential situation, it would be scarcely honourable to disclose all I saw; suffice it then to hint, that to my candid temper, it was painful to be obliged to connive at that borrowed bloom, which, after all was a substitute for that of nature; time, too, greatly baffled even these expedients, and threatened to render them wholly ineffectual. Many a cross and reproachful look had I now to endure; which, however, I took patiently, being always remarkably smooth and even in my temper. Well remembering how sadly time had spoiled the face of my poor old mistress, I dreaded the consequences if my present owner should experience, by and by, as rough treatment from him; and I believe she dreaded it too; but these apprehensions were needless. Time is not seldom arrested in the midst of his occupations; and it was so in this instance. I was one day greatly shocked, by beholding my poor mistress

stretched out in a remote part of the room, arrayed in very different ornaments to those I had been used to see her wear; she was so much altered that I scarcely knew her; but for this she could not now reproach me; I watched her thus for a few days, as she lay before me, as cold and motionless as myself: but she was soon conveyed away; and I, shortly afterwards, was engaged in the service of another mistress.

My new station was, in some respects, very similar to my last; that is, I was again placed in a young lady's apartment, where I did not doubt but I should be called to witness the same appearances and operations as before: but in this I was mistaken. The first circumstance that made me suspect my new mistress differed from my late one, was, that when she first entered her chamber after my arrival, I observed that she remained there for a considerable time, and at last went out again without taking the least notice of me: this surprised me exceedingly. The first time I had a full view of her, was the next morning as soon as she arose, when she came and spent a very few minutes in my company, adjusting a neat morning dress, and combing out some pretty, simple ringlets upon her fair forehead. It was not such a fine formed face, as I remember my last mistress's was, when I first entered her service; but having, by this time, from the nature of my studies, acquired considerable skill in

physiognomy, I confess it pleased me much better : and although I soon found I should meet with much less attention here, than I had lately been accustomed to, I was now too old, and knew too well how to estimate those attentions, to feel at all mortified at the neglect. The visits my new mistress paid me, were very regular ; about thrice in the day she used to avail herself for a short time of my services ; and while on these occasions I never remember to have received a cross or discontented look from her, so I never, on the other hand, witnessed that expression of secret satisfaction, or anxious inquiry, which I had often heretofore had occasion to remark.

My mistress spent much time alone in her chamber ; but it was rarely indeed, that she took any notice of me, except at those times when I was really wanted. I have known her sit many a time, for two or three hours, working or reading at the table over which I hung, without once lifting up her head to look at me ; though I could see her all the time. I have observed her light figure pass and repass twenty times before me, without her once glancing at me as she went by. Thus we lived together very good friends ; neither of us making any unreasonable demands upon the other. Time, as usual, passed away : but I was particularly struck in observing the different effect of his' operations on the countenance of my present possessor, and that of my last. There was, of course, in a few years

some visible alteration ; but although the bloom of youth began to fade, there was nothing less of sweetness, cheerfulness, and contentment in her expression. She retained the same placid smile, the same unclouded brow, the same mildness in her eye, (though it was somewhat less sparkling,) as when it first beamed upon me ten years before.

I saw here but few fine things and little variety ; except such as the changing seasons, and a moderate attention to changing fashions occasioned : but then, I was never annoyed, as I had been in my last place, with that heterogeneous mixture of fragments of littered finery, with which the room and dressing table used to be scattered in all directions, after the grand operation was over ; and which lay full in my view for hours, till my mistress's return at night, or more often till the next morning. All here was neat and orderly ; which to me was a very great accommodation ; having acquired, in early life, from the orderly habits of my poor old mistress, such a love of neatness, that any thing untidy was particularly offensive to me. I became, as you may easily imagine, much attached to my present employer, and wished for nothing better than to pass the remainder of my days in her service ; but herein I was disappointed.

One morning early, she appeared before me, surrounded by several fair attendants, and devoted to me a little more time and attention than was

usual with her. I shall never forget the expression of her countenance, as she stood arrayed all in white, and gave me one more pensive look, which I little thought, at the time, would be the last I should ever receive from her; but so it was. There was a great bustle in the house that morning, (whatever was the reason,) and I saw my fair mistress no more!

Ever since, I have continued in quiet possession of her deserted chamber; which is only occasionally visited by other parts of the family; sometimes my dear mistress's favourite cat will steal in, as though in quest of her; leap up upon the table, purr, and sweep her long tail across my face; then catching a glimpse of me jump down again, and run out as though she was frightened. I feel that I am now getting old, and almost beyond further service. I have an ugly crack, occasioned by the careless stroke of a broom, all across my left corner; my coat is very much worn in several places: even my new frame is now tarnished and old fashioned; so that I cannot expect any new employment.

Having now, therefore, nothing to reflect on but the past scenes of my life, I have amused myself with giving you this account of them. I said I had made physiognomy my study, and that I had acquired some skill in this interesting science. The result of my observations will, at least, be deemed impartial, when I say, that I am generally least

pleased with the character of those faces, which appear the most so with mine. And I have seen occasion so far to alter the opinions of my inexperienced youth, that, for those who pass the least time with me, and treat me with little consideration, I conceive the highest esteem; and their aspect generally produces the most pleasing *reflections*.

## XI.

“HER WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS.”

Prov. iii. 17.

THIS beautiful passage of Scripture sounds very familiarly to us. It is one of those texts so frequently quoted, and so often referred to, that much of its effect is lost upon us unless we meditate upon it closely, and take pains to enter into its meaning. Let us endeavour to do so on the present occasion; by considering the passage—first, as the declaration of God himself; secondly, as that of Solomon.

First—This is a declaration of the word of God; and all his words are true. Now we shall do well to regard it in this light, when we are tempted to consider the ways of religion, to which the passage refers, as any thing rather than what they are here

described to be: that “her paths are *peace*,” we are perhaps, at all times ready to admit: we know and feel, even the youngest of us, that there is no true peace—no peace of mind and of conscience, but in the paths of holiness. But *pleasant* is a term we are wont to apply to things of a very different nature.—We meet agreeable and entertaining company, and call them *pleasant* people:—those who have been spending some hours in the gay amusements of this world, will tell you they have had a *pleasant* evening:—but do we say with the same emphasis and feeling of God’s house and ordinances, and of the society of his people, that they are *pleasant*? Are there not many, on the contrary, who, if they spoke the language of their hearts, would use a term directly opposite in describing them? although they might allow that these things are right, safe, expedient, and even necessary. On such then—should there be any of our readers, who may, in their secret thoughts, entertain these ideas of the good ways of religion, we would earnestly press the words of the text as the words of God. He says “her ways are ways of *pleasantness*.” And let us remember, that this expression is addressed to us *as we are*. It is not spoken to angels, nor to “the spirits of the just made perfect;” but to us, in our present state; and more especially to the young, with all their earthly tastes, fascinating pleasures, and ardent pursuits. And He who asserts it is no stranger to the



human heart; he knows, intimately, its passions and propensities, and in what things it is prone to seek satisfaction. Nor let us imagine that He who so exactly estimates the true value of all things, in any degree underrates the worth of earthly good.

We are delighted with many things in this world; and He who gives us all things richly to enjoy, is fully aware of the pleasure they are calculated to produce. He is also perfectly acquainted with the averseness and distaste we are prone to feel towards Himself and His ways: but still he says of them that *they* are ways of *pleasantness*. How then are we to reconcile this unqualified declaration of God, with the secret persuasion of so many, perhaps of our own hearts also, that they are not so? What conclusion must be drawn but this—even that it is—it *must* be as God has said; and that, whoever may deny or doubt it, His ways *are* ways of pleasantness. They who think otherwise, only prove that they have never made a fair trial of them; have never set out in earnest in the way to Zion; but only viewed the road from an obscure distance; from whence they may discover the hills of difficulty, but can perceive neither the fruits nor flowers that adorn it. While they who are indeed travelling that road, unite with one heart and voice in corroborating the divine declaration. And this brings us to the second view we proposed to take of the subject, as the assurance and the experience of king Solomon.

Now, as he himself elsewhere remarks, there could not possibly be a person selected from all the kingdoms and ages of the world, so well qualified to decide upon the truth of this statement as himself; because he had made trial more than any man before or after him, of every other kind of pleasantness. Read his own account of the matter in that rare description of worldly prosperity which he has left upon record in the 2nd chapter of Ecclesiastes; and which is afterwards summed up in these memorable words—"So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour. Then I looked on the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun.—Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.—*Her* ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Now, which of us can expect to ensure so large a share of earthly good?—"what can the man do that cometh after the king?" We should, then, only betray our ignorance and weakness if we still secretly indulged the idea, that, notwithstanding all Solomon and the Bible may say, this world is a

sufficient portion ; and that it will not prove vanity and vexation of spirit to us. Let us remember, that Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived ; and shall we venture to set up *our* judgment in opposition to *his* ? Besides, this is not the language of Solomon only ; but of every human being who has arrived at the same period of life. That all here is vanity and vexation of spirit, is a confession reluctantly extorted even from “men of the world, who have their portion in it.” Or, if they will not avow it in words, it is a truth indelibly expressed in their countenances. While the same acknowledgment is cheerfully made by good men : All here indeed, is vanity and vexation, they say, but this does not afflict us, because our portion is not here ; this is not our rest ; but we know where to look for solid satisfaction. It is by such considerations that Solomon consoles himself for the disappointments he experienced in his earthly pursuits.—He, at last, discovers, that it is only in wisdom’s ways that happiness can be found :—this was *his* experience. Thus then we see, that the wisest and most experienced of men, and the unerring word of God, agree in assuring us, that the ways of religion, and they only, are ways of *pleasantness*.

Let us then, inquire, how it is that they are so ; and endeavour to reconcile the statement with some appearances that seem to contradict it. “Godliness,” the apostle tells us, “has the promise of the life that

now is, as well as of that which is to come." That is, the true Christian really participates with others, in the moderate enjoyment of earthly good: and has, over and above, the blessing of God, which alone "maketh rich without adding sorrow." While they who would grasp at more than the holy law of God allows, though they may experience some momentary gratification, yet, in fact, depart from happiness in the same proportion: and even their lawful enjoyments are without the sunshine of his favour. But more especially, they are ways of pleasantness because the truest felicity our souls are capable of proceeds from the sense of the favour of God, and communion with him. And, although in this world we cannot experience that fulness of joy which is felt in his immediate presence, yet we may partake so much of it, as far to surpass all terrestrial bliss. Some sweet springs of that stream which makes glad the city of God, refresh this wilderness below.

But it is also said, that the paths of religion are paths of peace; then we may truly say that they are pleasant, *because* they are peaceful. What real enjoyment can there be without peace of mind? and "there is no peace to the wicked." "My peace," the Saviour said, "I give unto you;" not such as the world giveth, but that which passeth all understanding. It is this inward tranquillity, this well-founded sense of safety; this readiness for all

changes, even for the last great change; and this meetness for another state; which alone can warrant a true enjoyment of this life. The Christian engages in his daily concerns with so sweet a persuasion of their being under the direction and blessing of his heavenly Father, that he is free from those disquieting cares and anxieties which so often cloud the brow of those who are without God in the world. He has his trials, indeed; but under the heaviest of them, he receives strong consolation from reflecting, that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." In prosperity he knows that God is fulfilling his gracious promise, that to those who "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all other things shall be added." And in the midst of all, he prizes the light of his countenance lifted up upon him, more than the brightest sunshine of this world. He lies down upon his bed with the sweetest serenity, knowing that the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. Is he young? The Lord then is the guide of his youth, and he hopes by "taking heed to his way, according to the word of God," to escape the dangers and temptations of an evil world. And he can look towards advancing years, to the loss of his earthly friends, and to old age itself, without dismay: because, when father and mother forsake him, the Lord has engaged to take him up. He believes also, that when he is old and grey-headed, He will be with him still. Such,

then, is the peace that is experienced in the ways of religion; and is not this peace *pleasantness*?

Many of the admonitions of Solomon are addressed expressly to the young: and this, among other passages, is intended to allure them into "the good old way" in which their fathers have walked. Youth is ever eager in the pursuit of pleasure; and here it is afforded to them—true, enduring, unchangeable, and ever increasing pleasure. Why then should we hesitate? O, reader! "taste and see that the Lord is gracious." But, remember, you must not expect to experience the *pleasantness* of religion, without a hearty devotedness to it. That which makes the good ways of the Lord appear so uninviting is, that so many walk irregularly in them; with a heavy, halting or wandering step. But the true pilgrim, who maintains a vigorous pace, who is never diverted from his course, who "presses towards the mark," and keeps it ever in view—he it is who experiences the full truth of this assertion; he "goes on his way rejoicing," and finds, indeed, that it is a "way of pleasantness, and that its paths are peace."

## XII.

### SUNDAY MORNING.

THAT is not likely to be a profitable Sabbath which is commenced without some suitable recollection, some sincere desire to improve and to sanctify it. Our first waking thoughts should be thus consecrated; should thus take possession of the mind, and pre-occupy it; otherwise those of a worldly kind will soon flow in; so that if we "do not our own works," we shall "think our own thoughts," which is as great a sin in the sight of God. But there are many reflections, (besides those more obvious ones, which are familiar to every serious mind,) that may be suggested to us by Sunday morning. Let us indulge them for a while.

This Sabbath dawns not on ourselves alone, but also on the millions of our favoured land; inviting all to forget the six days, in which they have laboured and done their work, and to remember this, and keep it holy. Alas! to multitudes how vain the summons. We see that "the world still lieth in wickedness," in no respect more strikingly, than by the total neglect of this day in numberless instances; and the very mistaken and partial observance of it.

in many more. It is melancholy to reflect on the thousands who welcome it only as a day of indulgence, idleness, or amusement. The Sabbath sun, which ought to arouse them betimes to its sacred duties, does but witness their longer indulgence. How many who "rise early and sit up late," on other days, to attend diligently to their worldly affairs, when they awake and recollect that it is *Sunday*, resolve to have "a little more sleep, a little more folding of the hands to sleep." And when at last they arise, if they do not allow themselves to engage in the business of other days, they do but fill up the heavy hours in the meanest indulgences; in the preparation or enjoyment of a luxurious meal, in the most trifling occupations, or in absolute idleness. What can be a more melancholy sight, than that of such a wretched, ill ordered family, thus wasting the sacred hours that many are spending in the house of God.

Others rise early, indeed, but it is only in order to lengthen their holiday. How many such are now preparing to profane the Sabbath! How are the roads and fields, in almost every part of our beautiful country, disfigured by these unhallowed visitants! How are our streets thronged with Sabbath breakers! The doors of the houses of God are thrown wide open, and they would be welcome as well as others. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" In vain is the affectionate invitation! They pass



on, resolved to have their pleasure, at whatever price.

But there is a brighter view of Sunday morning, to which it is refreshing to turn. How many are there, who have said of it, "early will I seek thee," and who, from their various and distant dwellings, have been, at the same hour, seeking in their closets a blessing on this welcome Sabbath. Their united supplications, uttered in various accents, and rising from the lowly cottage, the darksome hovel, as well as from abodes of comfort and affluence, ascend together, as an acceptable morning sacrifice to the throne of grace.

Again:—see from the streets and lanes, from the courts and alleys, of our crowded cities; from the hamlets and villages, from the high-ways and hedges, what numbers of decent children now issue forth to their respective Sunday Schools! How many little feet are at the same moment pacing the streets on this blessed errand! What an innumerable multitude would they form, could the whole of them be assembled on some vast plain before our view! What an animating spectacle to teachers! But although this cannot be, imagination may, in part, enable them to realize such a sight; and every private individual, who is about to engage in this good work, may be animated by the reflection, that however limited the sphere of their exertions, they are contributing their efforts, and doing their utmost

towards the well being of this countless multitude. And this leads us to another reflection. Behold the goodly company of young people from all corners of our land, animated (as we would hope) by the same feeling, preparing to commence their Sabbath morning's employment. Every teacher, as he or she is proceeding towards the school, might be encouraged, by recollecting, how many fellow labourers there are, unknown indeed to each other, and unconnected except in this common cause, who are setting out on the same noble business. Perhaps there is no heart glowing with truer cheerfulness, gladdened with more perfect peace, than that of the pious, diligent teacher, who, having early in the closet sought a blessing on the duties and services of the day, goes forth in the strength of the Lord to engage in them.

But let us now, in thought, pursue the thousands and ten thousands, who are pacing the streets, or crossing the fields and lanes in their way to the houses of God. And could we hope that all were animated by the same motive, that all were going to listen to the same faithful truth, it would be indeed a pleasing subject of contemplation.

But we would never for a moment disguise truth in order to indulge a pleasing vision. Of these multitudes, how many are but going to be established in error—how many to pass an idle hour—how many to satisfy their consciences with heartless forms—how many to sit careless, and unimpressed even under

faithful instructions! Still, however, with all these deductions, there are *many* who are sincerely going to “pay their vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people;” and this is a cheering reflection.

The crowded streets of a large city on a Sunday morning, may also afford another observation which should excite our liveliest gratitude. To see multitudes, of every different denomination, quietly proceeding, in open day, unmolested, and unquestioned, to their respective places of worship, is a beautiful evidence of the religious privileges we enjoy. “Every man may now sit under his own vine; and (whoever might wish to do it) none dares to make him afraid.” It was not always thus in England; and when we are walking peaceably to our place of worship, we should not forget the times when our good forefathers were obliged to assemble in secret, often by night; and to hide “in dens and caves of the earth,” from the rage of their persecutors. And now the voice of prayer and of praise is heard in our land. What numberless voices unite in that universal chorus which ascends, like a cloud of incense, to the heavens! This, then, is another animating reflection for Sunday morning.

But there are many who are absent from these solemnities, not by choice but necessity. Sunday morning has a peculiar aspect in a sick chamber. Those now on the bed of languishing, who have

hitherto neglected their Sabbaths, view it with peculiar emotions; feel its value, and resolve, if they are restored to health, to improve these precious seasons in future. While the true Christian from his sick bed hails its cheerful beams, and hopes for a Sabbath of rest and profit even there.

Others there are, on whom this Sabbath dawns, indeed, in vain: it is the first they have passed in eternity! Let our imagination visit the many chambers of death throughout our borders. These, like ourselves, have beheld many a cheerful Sabbath sun; but now, their eyes are closed to its brightness. The beams of this fair morning have, perhaps, penetrated the gloom of their chambers, and shone upon the silent walls, but they know it not. The darkness of death has fallen upon them. Ah, then, how unspeakably important is the question, how their former Sabbaths have been improved; since there are no more of these "accepted times," these "days of salvation," for them!

But let our thoughts (already so excursive) wander from our own happy island, to distant climes; recollecting that within the passage of a few hours, the same sun that beams in so cheerfully at the windows of our sanctuaries, and on the walls of our pleasant school-rooms, shines upon the plains of India—the wilds of Africa—the forests of America;—upon the ices of the North, and the islands of the South. That the same rays are reflected from the

gilded pagodas, where the millions of China flock to their idolatrous worship;—from the mosques of the false prophet;—from the gaudy temples of India; and light up the hideous features and grotesque shapes of ten thousand idol gods, “which are no gods,” in every “dark corner” of our globe. While we are illumined by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and are instructed in “the truth as it is in Jesus,” the red Indian roams the desert in search of his prey, or of his enemies: the dark Hindoo muses idly on the banks of the Ganges: far in the impenetrable regions of Africa—

“The Negro village swarms abroad to play.”

The fierce Arab hunts for spoil; or follows the slow caravan of spicy merchandize across the burning sands of the desert: while, in the west, the poor negro-slave toils beneath the lash of his hard taskmaster. Ah, then, what are the privileges of a Sabbath in England! Here and there indeed, in those benighted regions, the solitary missionary goes forth in the midst of hardship and peril, to hold up the light of truth; and would not he unite in the exclamation, surrounded as he is by difficulties and discouragements, and say, What are the privileges of a Sabbath in England!

But now, let us return nearer home, to make a more practical reflection. This Sabbath sun that shines on the millions of the human race, beams

also on *us*; “on *me*,” let every reader say; and to me the question is, How *I* shall employ it?—I am not one of the open Sabbath-breakers of the land; but am I not one of the countless multitude, who while, in form, they “keep a holy day,” yet, secretly, “say, What a weariness it is! When will it be over?” Or am I one of those to whom the Sabbath is a delight, who are “glad to go up to the house of the Lord.” Am I a faithful, regular, zealous teacher, preparing with others to join my beloved class? Or have I never offered my services to that good work? Am I, on the contrary, spending the intervals of worship in idleness and indulgence, and attention to my dress? If so, reader, no longer, we beseech you, waste your time in pitying or despising the poor Indian and Negro: no longer censure the pleasure-taking Sabbath-breaker: let your charity begin at home; and remember, that if your Sabbaths are misimproved, you are in a far more alarming situation than the untaught savage, “who knows not his Lord’s will!” Recollect, also, that the period is hastening, when the Angel of Death shall swear concerning you, that “Time,” and its Sabbaths, “shall be no longer.”

### XIII.

#### THE PLEASURES OF TASTE.

##### *A Dialogue.*

FATHER. Come girls, are you ready for a walk ?

MARY. Quite ready, papa.

MARTHA. Ready in two minutes, sir.

FATHER. Which way will you go this evening ?

MARTHA. To the parade, if you please, papa.

MARY. To the beach, papa. We shall be in time to see the sun set.

MARTHA. I don't like the beach ; no body walks on the beach.

FATHER. Then we shall have it all to ourselves.

MARTHA. To ourselves, indeed ! Mary always proposes those stupid walks where there is nothing to be seen.

MARY. O, Martha ! Nothing to be seen !

MARTHA. Nothing in the world but the sea.

FATHER. That is what we are come on purpose to look at.

MARTHA. Yes, very true : but there is just as good a sea view on the parade, and every body walks on the parade.

FATHER. Come then, away to the parade, if you will; and to please you both, we will return by the beach, and then enjoy the scene to ourselves.

MARY. Yes, thank you dear papa, so we will,  
(*sings.*)

“ And listen to the tuneless cry  
Of Fishing-gull, and Golden-eye.”

FATHER. A delightful evening!

MARTHA. Yes, very pleasant; and what crowds of company!

MARY. I think I never saw the sea so calm.

MARTHA. Pray look at those ladies, Mary. Did you ever see such frightful pelisses!

MARY. How bright that white sail looks, in the distance, with the sun upon it.

MARTHA. But the fringe is pretty.

FATHER. And the sea birds; see how they sparkle in the sun-shine.

MARY. Yes;

——“ The silver-wing’d sea fowl on high,  
Like meteors bespangle the sky;  
Or dive in the gulph, or triumphantly ride  
Like foam on the surges, the swans of the tide.”

MARTHA. Genteel girls, are they not? those that just passed us;—I wonder who they are! I wish our spencers had been of that colour; it was just the kind I wished for, only mamma would have these.



MARY. O let us turn! The sun will be down presently: we shall lose it if we walk to the end of the parade.

FATHER. A fine sun-set indeed!

MARY. What a beautiful reflection on the water! like a column of fire.

MARTHA. As if the sun did not set every night in the year! It looks so strange to be standing still, like nobody else, does it not?

FATHER. Nay, we will not regard that.

MARY. How large and red! There, now it just begins to touch the sea. How beautiful! how grand! Is it not, father?

FATHER. Truly it is: and if we were not so much accustomed to the spectacle, it would strike us far more. It is no wonder that the generality of mankind, who rarely divert their attention from the common interests, occupations, and vanities of life, to contemplate the wonders and beauties of nature, regard them with perfect indifference. They think, as Martha says, that the sun sets every night in the year, and they wonder what there can be to admire in it. But a cultivated taste counteracts, in a great degree, this effect of habit, which otherwise renders the most sublime objects unaffecting to us. It enables us to see things as they are: to the eye of taste, nature is ever fresh and new, and those objects which it has contemplated a thousand times still interest and delight it. Thus a source of unfailling

and refined pleasure is opened to us; and its chief value consists in this, that it enables us to derive enjoyment from things that are to be seen every day and every night, and that constantly surround us.

MARY. There goes the sun!—the last, last speck : now it is quite gone.

FATHER. Gone to enlighten the other hemisphere :—it is now dawning on the great Pacific, calling the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands to their daily labour, and leaving us to darkness and repose.

MARY. And while we are sleeping so quietly in our beds, at what an amazing pace this globe of ours must be spinning about, to bring us round to face the sun again to-morrow morning!

FATHER. Yes, there is One “who never slumbers nor sleeps; the darkness and the light are both alike to Him.” He it is who holds the planets in their courses, and maintains the vast machinery in perfect order and harmony. He looks down with pure benevolence upon our sleeping and waking world, and “causes His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust,” upon Pagan and Christian lands. “His tender mercies are over all his works.”

MARTHA. Papa, shall we take another turn?

FATHER. With all my heart; but tell me, my dear girl, is there not something more interesting in the scene we have beheld, than in this moving medley of ribbons and feathers?

MARTHA. O certainly, papa, more interesting; but

surely it is pleasant and cheerful—amusing, at least, to look about one a little, like other people.

FATHER. All very well in its way, my dear; but a little of it, I confess, satisfies me. Besides, I should be very sorry to be so dependant upon circumstances for my amusement, as to be pleased only with these gay scenes.

MARTHA. How so, papa? There is always something gay to be seen, if one chooses.

FATHER. Not always; suppose now, I were to send you to your uncle's farm house; where there is nothing to behold but fields and trees, and green lanes by day; and nothing but the stars overhead by night.

MARTHA. I believe, indeed, I should very soon be tired of it.

FATHER. Then you see, your happiness depends upon circumstances; and you are not so independent as one who could be pleased and happy any where.

MARTHA. O, but I would never go to a place where I could not be happy.

FATHER. Now you talk like a silly child. We are not always—we are scarcely ever, entirely at our own disposal, and it may happen that you will have to spend, not a few weeks only, but years; your whole life, perhaps, in such a situation.

MARTHA. O shocking! I hope not I'm sure.

FATHER. Nay, that is an idle wish. Hope rather

for a mind capable of being satisfied with those natural, simple pleasures, which Providence every where places within our reach, and then you are more independent than a queen. Our rural poet well sings,

“ I would not for a world of gold,  
That Nature’s lovely face should tire.”

For truly an eye to see and a heart to feel its beauties, are of more importance to happiness, than a great estate.

MARTHA. The country is very beautiful, certainly, in some parts ; and I should like of all things to live in a fine park, with lawns and trees, and deer, and all that kind of things.

FATHER. I dare say you would. But suppose, instead of being mistress of this fine park, you were only a tenant’s daughter, living in a humble dwelling on its outskirts.

MARTHA. I should not like that at all.

FATHER. No?—Why you could walk in the park, and look at the lawns, and the trees, and the deer, as well as the lady herself.

MARTHA. Yes ; just *look* at them.

FATHER. Well, the mistress herself could do no more. And let us suppose, (a very possible case,) that this lady has no true taste for the scenes which surround her ; that she values them chiefly as articles of splendour and show ; and prefers a saloon

crowded with company, to a walk in her peaceful lawns and groves; while the tenant's daughter is gifted with taste and sentiment to enjoy these natural beauties; then I maintain, that her humble neighbour is the happier, the more independent, the more truly elevated of the two.

MARTHA. La, papa!

FATHER. Yes; and I believe it not unfrequently happens, that the great, unintentionally indeed, thus provide pleasures for others, of which they themselves never knew the true enjoyment. So true is it, that "man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses," but in what he is in himself. They who depend on artificial pleasures for their happiness, are miserable if "riches take wings and fly away," so as to prevent them the means of gratification. But the fields, the trees, the blue sky, the starry heavens, are always the same, and of these pleasures none of the vicissitudes of life can deprive us.

By this time the father and his daughters had reached the lonely beach: the moon was just rising over the eastern cliffs: the planet Venus, that beautiful evening star, which made such a brilliant appearance during the last winter, was now beginning to glow in the west: a star or two faintly glimmered overhead: the sea was perfectly calm; and the gentle, regular fall of the wave on the pebbly shore, seemed not to interrupt the solemn stillness. Mary

and her father enjoyed the scene: they now walked silently; for to those who can feel them, such scenes dispose less to conversation than reflection.

There is this grand difference between natural, rational pleasures, and those that are artificial;—and it is one by which they may easily be distinguished;—that from the former, the transition to religious thoughts and engagements is easy and agreeable: whether we contemplate nature with the eye of taste, or investigate it with that of philosophy, our thoughts are readily led upwards to the great Author of all; “all whose works praise Him:” and it is at such times, with peculiar appropriateness that the Christian can say,—

“This awful God is ours,  
Our Father, and our friend.”

But\*from trifling thoughts and dissipating amusements, the transition is violent and difficult indeed; and is, in fact, very rarely attempted.

So it proved in the present instance. When they returned from their walk, Mary retired to her closet, with a mind serious, and disposed for its sacred duties, while Martha remained before her glass, ruminating on the pattern of a new spencer, which had attracted her attention on the parade.

## XIV.

### PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS.

To see visions, and dream dreams, has been a privilege common to those (if we may credit their assertions) whose labours have been devoted to the edification of the public: and fortunate, indeed, should we account ourselves, if, instead of devoting many a weary hour to the service of our young readers, with our eyes wide open, and our pens full gallop—we could, like our more favoured predecessors, answer the purpose as well, or better, by merely falling to sleep. For my own part, having no hope of such extraordinary favours, I must be content to present them with one of my waking dreams; trusting they will be able to find the interpretation thereof.

Those readers who are familiar with allegorical adventures, will not be surprised to hear that I found myself, one fine evening, on an extensive plain, thronged with persons of every age and condition; amongst the younger parts of the assembly, I was pleased to recognize some thousands of the readers of the *Youth's Magazine*. The crowd was

in perpetual movement: many running to and fro, with an appearance of restlessness and agitation; and upon inquiry I found that they were all in quest of the same person, each expecting to meet her at every turn, although they were looking in such opposite directions. The name of this person I was told, was *Happiness*. "A pretty name," thought I, and I determined to join in the pursuit. It was curious to observe the various expedients which were resorted to in order to discover her. Some were groping amid heaps of dust which they had collected from the surface of the earth; others thought she might be concealed among the daisies and buttercups that covered the plain: others walked about with vacant countenances, idly seeking her among the crowd: while a few, like myself, unconsciously sought her while observing the rest.

Our attention was at length attracted by the sound of lively music, and at the same time a gay procession was seen advancing from a distant part of the plain. As it approached, an elegant female figure was distinguished amid a train of fair attendants: her flowing robe exhibited all the colours of the rainbow; her auburn locks, entwined with wreaths of pearl and diamond, floated in the breeze: her voice was soft, her smile enchanting, and her eyes sparkled more than the brilliants on her brow. Her attendants, also, were gaily attired: they danced and sang, and strewed artificial flowers in



her path. She was received with universal acclamation; for all concluded her to be the person of whom we were in search. "It can be no other than *Happiness* herself," we said; and she bowed assent to the name. She was soon surrounded by the wondering crowd, who thronged about her in clamorous admiration. Upon a signal from their mistress, the attendant maidens opened a variety of elegant caskets and vases, which they bore in their hands, and from whence they scattered a profusion of costly gifts, toys, trinkets, and dainties, amid the scrambling crowd. When the tumult this occasioned had a little subsided, she commanded silence, and thus addressed the assembly;—

"Youths and maidens, behold one who has peculiar claims to your regard. I am devoted to your interests: I fly the infirm, the poor, and the miserable, that I may exclusively promote your gratification. I come to invite you to my palace; where every delight that my genius can invent, and my bounty bestow, is prepared for your reception: Who will follow me?" This question was answered by an instantaneous movement in the crowd; every one pressing forwards to join her standard.

It was at this moment that another graceful figure was observed advancing from an opposite part of the plain. Her step sedate and dignified, her countenance radiant and benignant. She wore

a plain robe of delicate whiteness, and a simple wreath of field flowers bound her hair. All eagerly inquired her name ; but our fair leader, when appealed to, declared she knew her not, having never seen her before. She would fain have led us off without waiting to salute her ; but curiosity prompted us to remain. This personage had no train of attendants ; being only supported on one side by a sturdy youth, whose name, as I afterwards learned, was *Industry* ; and on the other, by a maid of stately mien, called *Integrity*. It was with an air at once of noble frankness and graceful modesty, that she now introduced herself by the name of *Happiness*.

"Friends," said she, "I make no great pretensions ; no such brilliant promises as those to which you have just listened ; but you will find me sincere and faithful to my engagements : it is but justice to you, and to myself, that I should reveal my name, and her's who has assumed it. This is her old artifice ; she always wishes to assume mine, but her real name is *Pleasure*. Many suppose that we are, at least, near of kin, and dwell under the same roof ; but the truth is, that our families were never connected, and that my abode is far remote from her's. You have now only to choose whom you will follow : you have all been seeking me where I was not to be found ; now if you wish I will conduct you

to my residence. It is true that now and then, a weary votary of my gay rival, after fruitless endeavours to find me in her domains, at last comes to seek me in my native valley, but the greater number of her followers never, never return. Suffer me, then, to lead you at once, to my safe and pleasant abode.

She ceased ; and every face seemed agitated with painful indecision ; her look, her manner, and her name interested all hearts. But during the whole of her address, *Pleasure* had ordered her music to play ; the merry tambourine and tinkling cymbal, flashed over our heads ; her silken banners of purple and gold, streamed in the air ; the maidens recommenced their sprightly dance ; while *Pleasure* herself, waving her white arm, beckoned incessantly to the crowd ; till overpowered by her attractions, a very large majority of the assembly turned their backs upon *Happiness*, and rejoined the rival standard.

Even of the few who stayed, several seemed to hesitate, halting and turning incessantly to listen to the receding music ; till at length, they complained that they were unable to keep pace with the quick step of *Industry* ; and that they were disconcerted by the steady eye of *Integrity* ; so, after making an awkward apology to *Happiness*, they deserted to the merry multitude. The small company who still remained followed her with a cheerful, determined,

air: and I watched the happy party as it crossed the plain, till it disappeared among the trees that shade the valley of *Happiness*.

For my own part, I resolved to follow the crowd to the palace of *Pleasure*, just to make my observations. As I reached the rear of the procession, I was really disgusted to see several hoary heads nodding to the music, and limbs tottering after the train as fast as they were able. "Surely, thought I, these would do better to repose peacefully in the Asylum of *Happiness*!" But I presently learned, that those who have been strangers to her in early life, rarely seek her acquaintance afterwards; and that although *Pleasure* treats them with marked disrespect, they persist in pursuing her wherever she goes—the disfigurement of her pageants, and the lumber of her halls.

We soon left the green plain and its pleasant trees in the distance; and proceeded till we reached the suburbs of a large city, whose domes and spires, and crowded roofs, were just visible through the smoke and vapour. All the bells were ringing, and the streets, lit up with long rows of lamps, resounded with the rattling of wheels and the trampling of horses. At length, the magnificent palace of our leader was discovered, rising above the surrounding buildings, and richly decorated with festoons of variegated lamps. A blaze of light from brilliant chandeliers, shone from its innumerable windows;

while the merry sound of the viol and all kinds of instruments, was heard from within. The halls were already thronged with visitants, and we all crowded in, eager to share the entertainment.

There have been so many descriptions of the interior of this palace, that it would be quite superfluous to repeat them: and indeed it were an endless task. It is but justice, however, to say, that *Pleasure* had not exaggerated in her description. There were numerous suits of apartments, fitted up to suit the various tastes of the different visitors: many to regale the senses, others to delight the fancy; some, even to feast the intellect. For a time, all was life and gaiety. New comers, I observed, always seemed to think that one half had not been told them: yet I could but remark, how many, after a while, would suddenly forsake their pursuits, with looks of dissatisfaction and fatigue; and recline on sofas and couches, where they gaped and sighed, wondering why they did so. Others, with the same uneasy appearance, persisted in pacing from one apartment to another, as if in search of something that ever eluded them: and what struck me as a strange inconsistency, was, that several protested they were only come to look for *Happiness*, persuaded that she was concealed somewhere in the palace; although they had themselves seen her retire to her own quiet vale, quite in an opposite direction. Every hour increased the number of weary and

discontented faces; the revelry however continued; and *Pleasure*, to do her justice, made every effort to keep up the spirits of her guests, till she herself seemed nearly exhausted with her exertions. It being now long past midnight, I began to think of retiring, for my curiosity was fully satisfied: and I went, prepared with as good an excuse as I could devise, to pay my parting compliments to *Pleasure*, whom I found reclining on her throne, with a languid eye, and haggard countenance. She received my apologies with coldness, and expressed no wish to detain me; for it seems that *Pleasure* does not like to be looked at by any but her admirers.

Having escaped from the crowded apartments of the palace, I presently reached the outskirts of the city; where I no sooner began to inhale the fresh air, than my spirits experienced a sudden exhilaration. I breathed freely, and lost the sense of fatigue. Dawn was now breaking over the distant hills; and by the time I regained the plain whence we set out, a light, rosy tint, the pure blush of morning, was spread on every object: the lark sprang up, and commenced her merry carol over my head: a refreshing breeze gently stirred the foliage:—I felt that I was approaching the regions of *Happiness*.

I now looked about for the nearest path to the valley; which, although I had distinctly marked the evening before, I could not now readily distinguish.

At this moment I was unexpectedly accosted by *Happiness* herself, who being fond of early rising, had overtaken me in her morning walk. She saluted me with a courteous smile, and offered her hand to conduct me to her residence. But at first sight I did not recollect her; my eyes had been so much dazzled by the glare of light in the palace, that I could not see her distinctly, and even when she made herself known to me I could scarcely believe her to be the same person that I had seen a few hours before. I thought her features plain, and that she looked less cheerful and engaging; but every step we took together seemed to heighten her beauty, and to render her conversation more animating. At length we reached the valley, and I descried the white turrets of her mansion rising above the trees.

## XV.

### PLEASURE AND HAPPINESS.

"I PROMISED," said Happiness, "to lead you to my mansion; but this is the hour of morning sacrifice, and we must first repair to the altar of *Devotion*." So saying, she conducted me to a temple of the most simple architecture, where all the inhabitants of the valley were already assembled. A cloud of fragrant incense, which was the prayers of saints, curled in white wreaths among the trees, and thence ascended in a stately column to the sky. When the solemnities were concluded, *Devotion*, the priestess, with a serene brow, pronounced a benediction, and dismissed the assembly.

Withdrawing silently from the temple, we repaired to a spacious hall in the mansion, where long tables were spread, furnished abundantly with plain and wholesome provision. At these tables a healthy, handsome woman presided, called *Temperance*; who did the honours of her board with perfect grace, and with the warmest hospitality. But there was one singular custom: upon a certain signal, given by herself, every one present immediately ceased to regale; and if a cup or dish had been tasted by any of the



company afterwards, it would have been considered as a personal affront to the lady herself. *Happiness* assured me, that if, on any occasion, *Temperance* chanced to be absent from her place, she herself, (being always subject to fits,) fainted at table; and could never be revived till *Temperance* brought her restoratives.

This signal being given, the whole company rose from table, and immediately repaired to their respective apartments. Those to which *Happiness* first conducted me, and which formed one extensive wing of the building, were under the superintendence of *Industry*, that brisk youth on whose arm *Happiness* leaned when I first met her; and who was, she told me, with the exception of *Déotion*, her nearest relation. This long suit of rooms was variously furnished, according to the different rank and circumstances of the inhabitants. Here were to be heard the clatter of machinery, the groans of the engine, the strokes of the hammer, and the roaring of the forge. There were to be seen the implements of husbandry, and the bustle of trade. Further on, I observed countless numbers of females, plying the busy needle. Beyond these, we reached apartments of greater elegance; over which two persons presided of remarkably interesting appearance; called *Science* and *Literature*. The former, a silver-headed sage, of a mild, venerable aspect; before whom, as we approached, I involuntarily made a low

prostration. The latter, an ardent, interesting youth, with a fine eye and a pale cheek: he wore a wreath of evergreens on his temples, and was attended by all the muses. As we passed him, I turned to *Happiness*, and inquired if she did not spend the greater proportion of her time in this part of her residence. She smiled at the question, and replied, that she was prevented from shewing any such partiality, by certain evil genii, which occasionally infested her domains, and which often compelled her to fly from one apartment to another, especially if she had stayed in any of them rather longer than usual. "Here, for instance," said she, "there are two or three little impertinent demons, called *Ambition*, *Envy*, and *Irritability*, who tease that poor youth sadly, and make him look so pale and wan: for my own part, I have so great an antipathy to them, than I can never stay in the same room with any of them; so that, I assure you, I am glad, sometimes, to make my escape from these parts to go yonder and sing, among the spinning wheels. There is, however," continued she, "an amiable handmaid of *Devotion's*, of low stature, called *Humility*, who has power to charm away these intruders; and when they send her to solicit my return, she never fails to bring me back again."

She next led me to the other great wing of the building, where I observed the apartments were fitted

up with the greatest attention to comfort and accommodation. Here presided a glowing, warm-hearted, interesting looking creature, called *Affection*. As we approached she smiled sweetly upon us ; but there was a tear in her eye, and something of anxiety in her expression. As I looked into the many rooms which formed this division of the building, I beheld cheerful fires blazing, and small domestic circles formed around them. There were smiling mothers, with infants in their arms ; and fathers, with groups of rosy children climbing their knees ; there were brothers and sisters, walking hand in hand ; and hoary heads reclining on youthful bosoms. “ This is a pretty sight,” said I : “ Yes ;” said *Happiness*, “ and perhaps, if I had any preference, it is here that I should most frequently repose. But I must tell you, that these apartments are peculiarly subject to invasion. There is a stern matron called *Affliction*, wearing a mourning habit, who walks up and down this gallery, and is continually turning in to one or other of the rooms : whenever she appears, I am obliged to retire : but during my absence, *Devotion*, when applied to, dispatches two gentle handmaids, called *Peace* and *Resignation*, who are the most excellent substitutes I could employ. And if they are treated courteously, and made heartily welcome, it is seldom long before I shew my face again : I have heard it remarked, that I never look so healthy, nor wear so

cheerful a smile, as after I have been banished, for a time, by that stern matron. There are some few of these rooms, indeed, where she has been so busy, that I have never since been able to gain free admittance: I am not even invited to return: they complain that my eye is too bright, and my manners too lively; and they find *Peace* and *Resignation* more congenial associates. Yet, there are times when I steal in unperceived, behind one or other of these handmaids, and enliven the party, though they do not suspect I am there.

“But the worst enemy these apartments have to dread, is an ugly noisy fiend, called *Discord*; who occasionally crawls in through some breach, which *Charity* (whose business it is to keep the hangings in repair) has left unclosed. When this happens, I fly quite out of hearing; and cannot be prevailed upon to return, unless that kind-hearted girl comes, with an apology, to petition for my re-appearance. As to *Affliction*, I am far from regarding her as an enemy: she is, in fact, but a faithful ally. You observed the vast numbers that flocked to the palace of *Pleasure*: it is always thus that she succeeds in leading off a large majority. And although comparatively few ever make their escape from her halls, yet, for that few, I am almost entirely indebted to the address of *Affliction*. Of all the messengers I dispatch with invitations to my abode, none are so successful as she. You would be sur-

prised to hear how many of the inhabitants of this place have been first driven by her from the palace of *Pleasure*, and then led by *Devotion* to our quiet valley."

The last suit of rooms I visited, was on the upper story; and they presented a very interesting and busy scene. A benignant personage, called *Benevolence*, presided here. The moment we ascended, I observed that a fresh glow overspread the face of *Happiness*, and her eyes beamed with more than their wonted effulgence. She met *Benevolence* with a cordial salutation, though it was but a hasty one; for he declared he had so much business on his hands, that he could not stay even to talk with *Happiness*. We followed him, however, through several different rooms, where there was much to gratify my curiosity. In one of these, I saw two or three solitary individuals, hard at work in breaking the chains, and unloosing the fetters, from thousands of black men; and warding from their bleeding backs the strokes of the lash, which a whole band of gentlemen-ruffians were attempting to inflict. In another room, there was a small circle of females, surrounded with a crowd of widows and orphans, to whom they distributed coats and garments. In one long apartment I saw thousands of children, of all colours and countries, receiving instruction. And while some were engaged in their tuition, others were running to and fro, along the gallery, and up

and down the staircase, with piles of Bibles under their arms, which they distributed to every creature that passed. "Here," said I, "I should presume no evil powers dare intrude." At that *Benevolence* shook his head: "In time," said he, "we hope to expel them entirely; but I assure you, that if I do but fall asleep for a few minutes, there are two officious beings, called *Ostentation* and *Party-spirit*, who have the impudence to wear my dress: however," said he, "it must be confessed, that these impertinent fellows work very hard, and do a great deal of business for me, so that I should sometimes scarcely know how to get on without them; and till I have more of my own family grown up, I am obliged to wink at their intrusion: sometimes, indeed, I am quite ashamed to see how much more they can accomplish than I do myself."

I had now visited all the great divisions of the building; and *Happiness* said it would be endless to conduct me through every secret passage, and into every retired closet, to which no one had access but herself. When she ceased to speak, I gazed at her and sighed: "Alas!" said I, "and is it so, that even *your* sanctuary is thus liable to invasion, and that those who come to reside under your protection, cannot insure your presence for an hour: whither then shall I go?" "Forbear these murmurings," said she, "and follow me." I did so; and she led me once more to the temple of *Devotion*. We found

the priestess employed in trimming the flame on her altar, which during the light and bustle of day, was, she said, very apt to languish. *Happiness* told her my complaint, and she thus addressed me:—

“ Know you not, poor mortal,” she said, “ that although *Happiness* has been permitted to erect a temporary residence in this valley, it is not her hereditary estate—and that she reigns here only by a limited and precarious right? Her paternal mansion is in a higher region : there her reign will be absolute, and her presence perpetual ; and there the inhabitants of the valley will eventually accompany her. From the upper windows of this temple,” continued she, “ the golden towers of that palace are occasionally visible : when the sky is clear and the air serene, I can always distinguish them. Do but look steadily, for a time, and you also may perceive them.” I turned my tearful eyes towards the quarter where *Devotion* pointed ; but a gross vapour, rising from the earth, prevented my discerning a single turret. *Devotion*, however, assured me that they were there ; and I believed her.

## XVI.

### REVELATION XX. 12.

*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.*

READER—you will be there! This awful scene, which the apostle John saw in prophetic vision, will be realized; and not the most obscure individual that exists shall be then forgotten: for “it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment.” Is it not a strange thing that they who have once heard this, should ever be indifferent to it?—that days and weeks should pass without a thought being given to *that* day!—that many who hear and read of the judgment to come, have never, perhaps in their lives, allowed themselves seriously to reflect upon it, and to recollect how deeply and intimately it concerns themselves! If some important event relating to the present life, could be foretold, such as our entering into the possession of a great estate, our going to reside in a foreign country, or that some great misfortune would befall us; if we could know beyond a doubt that some such thing would happen, would it not become the subject of



our continual thought—the first idea that occurred when we awoke in the morning, the last before we fell asleep at night? And although we might frequently be diverted from it by the necessary engagements of life, still, there would remain a consciousness of it upon our minds, and at every leisure moment it would be the constantly returning recollection.

But it is not necessary to suppose an impossible case. Are we not conscious that affairs of far inferior importance to any that have been mentioned—some expected pleasure that perhaps is to last but a day, has engrossed, for the time, all our thoughts and attention? and this, although every thing connected with our worldly affairs is attended with so much uncertainty, that we cannot be sure that the pleasure we plan for to-morrow will ever be realized; or, that to-morrow may not deprive us of the enjoyment we possess to-day. Now the great event to which we have alluded, has none of these uncertainties to lessen its importance:—"it will surely come;" and every one of us must be awakened by that tremendous blast, when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised;" the reader and the writer will hear it.

There is no possible way in which this subject can be regarded, but shews it to be one of the deepest interest. Should we think it a matter of delightful anticipation if we were expecting to visit some of the

natural curiosities of our globe, such as the falls of Niagara, or the great volcanos of *Ætna* and *Vesuvius*? Then there is a greater sight than these that we shall certainly behold; “for the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Why do not our thoughts more frequently dwell upon such an expectation as this?

We should perhaps consider it a remarkable occurrence in our lives if we were to be introduced to some of the princes of this world, especially if it were in order to transact some important concern with them ourselves: this will probably never happen to any of us: but a time approaches when we must stand before a greater than Solomon,” “and every eye shall behold him.”—

It would be dreadful to witness one of those awful convulsions of nature by which whole cities have been overthrown and plunged in sudden destruction. But that will surely be a more terrible sight, to escape which many will wish even for such a calamity; “calling to the rocks and to the mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.” Thus, if this “great day of the Lord” were only to be considered as an object of curiosity, of philosophic interest, it might reasonably engross every leisure moment of reflection; for not all the pageants that ever glittered on this earth, not all the

most ingenious contrivances of art, nor even the grand phenomena of nature, could pretend to the slightest comparison with the splendors and terrors of that spectacle. But so great is our individual interest in its transactions, that these considerations sink in comparison to insignificance. Yes, for our state for eternity—that word of unfathomable meaning, will then be decided. O, for language to express! O, for hearts enlarged to comprehend its import!

Are these things wonderful? Yet there is a thing still more astonishing; even—that many who know of this great transaction, and are assured of their own personal concern in it, should be indifferent about it; should be able to hear and to read of it without emotion, without recollection, without examination, without fear;—and this, although they are conscious of being at present quite unprepared for the trial! There is many a timid creature who fears where no fear is—trembling at the slightest accident, and shrinking from the most distant apprehension of danger, who can yet brave the thought of the judgment-day:—can read those passages of Scripture where it is described, with carelessness; can feel at ease, and enter with avidity into the affairs of the world, without sparing a thought—one *serious* thought upon the subject! This is misplaced courage indeed!—this is hardihood that surpasses all expression! To such conduct the Bible

gives the proper name : there it is called *folly* ; and most appropriately. They are fools who neglect their own interest ; and a wise man is he who pays the greatest attention to the greatest things. In worldly affairs this is readily admitted. Yet the man who should neglect his business to play with the toys of his infancy, would act rationally compared with him “ who lays up treasure for himself in this world, but is not rich toward God.” If the heart of man were not hard, blind, and deceitful above all things, such folly could not be. Perhaps one of the chief delusions whereby persons suffer themselves to put away the serious consideration of a judgment to come is, that it is so *distant* an event. Ages upon ages must roll away, perhaps, before we shall be roused from our long slumber. But it is only the narrow and limited extent of our present views that can give such a consideration any weight. He who “ sees the end from the beginning, and to whom a thousand years are as one day,” knows that the importance of that event is not at all lessened by its imagined distance :—awful descriptions of it are accordingly given, in order to arouse us to prepare for it. Abel, for whom the first grave was opened, has had indeed, in our view of things, a long, long repose there : but is it therefore of less consequence to him that he was “ righteous,” and that God had respect to his offering ? Will he have less occasion to rejoice, when he stands on the right hand of the

Judge, than the saint who has lived in these last times?

It might also be suggested to those who would cry peace to themselves on account of the supposed distance of judgment, that they who are best skilled in interpreting the prophecies of Scripture, are generally of opinion that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" and that we of this generation will have but a short rest in the grave. Perhaps before the stone that guards our dust shall have mouldered, —before the letters that record our names are quite effaced, it shall be torn up "by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God."

But how near or how distant the time may be is of little consequence, seeing it is *certain*. This it is that gives it its importance. How slight an alleviation is it to the agonies of a condemned criminal to obtain a reprieve, if he knows that it is *only* a reprieve! and in this view we may justly regard the interval, whether long or short, between death and judgment. "The vision is for an appointed time;" and although "of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels of God," yet it is unchangeably fixed: though it seem to tarry, yet we may wait for it with certain expectation, for at that appointed time it will surely come: it will tarry no longer! Nor let any one imagine that amid such an innumerable assembly, he may possibly be overlooked. It is said that "every one of us must give

an account of himself to God, and that the dead, small as well as great, stood before Him." There is, therefore, no person, so young, so obscure, so humble in station or in intellect, but shall stand alone at the bar of that tribunal. So that if you, reader, were to be the only individual singled out for judgment before an assembled universe, your case would not be at all more important or tremendous than it is. But there is another obvious consideration which silences every excuse for indifference, namely, that if judgment be far off, death is near: there may be but a step between us and it; and death will decide our state as certainly as judgment. "There is no repentance in the grave;"—"he that is then unholy must be unholy still."

The unconcern that so many exhibit on this vast subject, can only be accounted for by attributing it to want of *thought*. It is impossible really to *reflect*, and remain indifferent. The remedy, therefore, for such strange and fatal apathy obviously is, to *acquire such habits of reflection* as to familiarize the mind with the concerns of another life. We should then be able to see, by the strong light of Eternity, that things of the greatest importance which only concern this life—its most interesting and endearing engagements, are less than nothing in comparison with our soul's welfare. And this would inevitably bring us to make that inquiry with earnestness, which at present perhaps is only made with carelessness,

“What shall we do to be saved?” “What shall we do to inherit eternal life?”—It is to bring us to this that those grand representations are made in the Scriptures; that by such terrors men may be persuaded—persuaded to flee for refuge “to lay hold on the hope set before them.” What that hope is, we all know;—“Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!” That terrible expression, “the *wrath* of the Lamb” belongs to Him only as the judge of those who finally refuse to behold Him in this gracious character.

As for those who have a good hope of “going forth with joy to meet their Lord, with their loins girt, and their lamps burning,” what an interesting subject of contemplation is this! Let not the trifles of the world ever obscure it. Let not present pleasures, or present sorrows, greatly affect them, seeing they “endure but for a moment.” When we look around on this beautiful world, with all its interests and enchantments, let us recollect, that “all these things shall be dissolved”—not forgetting the inference of the apostle, “What manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness!”

## XVII.

### DIALOGUE BETWEEN LUCY AND HER MOTHER.

ONE day a lady and her daughter called upon Lucy's mother, and sat with her an hour or more, conversing on various subjects. Lucy's age was not such as to make it proper for her to take part in the conversation; she sat sometimes listening to what passed, and sometimes making silent observations on the dress or manners of her mother's visitors. When they took leave, she began the following conversation.

LUCY. What a good thing it is that people cannot see one's thoughts!

MOTHER. It would be inconvenient, sometimes, if they could.

LUCY. O, worse than inconvenient! to day, for instance, I would not have had Mrs. and Miss G. know what I was thinking of for all the world.

MOTHER. Indeed! Pray may *I* know what it might be?

LUCY. O yes, mamma, you may; it was no real harm. I was only thinking what an odd, fat, disagreeable kind of looking woman Mrs. G. was;—and what a tiresome way she had of telling long



stories ; and that Miss G. was the vainest girl I ever saw ; I could see all the time, she was thinking of nothing but her beauty, and her—

MOTHER. Come, come, no more of this. I have heard quite enough.

LUCY. Well, Mamma, but only do suppose they could have known what I was thinking of!

MOTHER. Well, and what then do you suppose?

LUCY. Why, in the first place, I dare say they would have thought me an impertinent, disagreeable little thing.

MOTHER. I dare say they would.

LUCY. So what a good thing it is that people cannot see one's thoughts! is it not?

MOTHER. I rather think it does not make so much difference as you imagine.

LUCY. Dear me, I think it must make a great deal of difference.

MOTHER. Did not you say just now, that Miss G. was a vain girl, and that she thought a great deal of her beauty?

LUCY. Yes, and so she does, I am certain.

MOTHER. Pray, my dear, who told you so?

LUCY. Nobody: I found it out myself.

MOTHER. But how did you find it out, Lucy.

LUCY. Why, mamma, I could see it, as plain as could be. ■

MOTHER. So then, if you could have looked into her heart, and had seen her think to herself—

“What a beauty I am!—I hope they admire me”—it would have made no alteration in your opinion of her.

LUCY. (*Laughing*) No, mamma; only have confirmed me in what I thought before.

MOTHER. Then what advantage was it to her that you could not see her thoughts?

LUCY. (*Hesitating*) Not much, to her, certainly—just then at least:—not to such a vain looking girl as she is.

MOTHER. What do you suppose gives her that vain look?

LUCY. Being so pretty, I suppose.

MOTHER. Nay, think again: I have seen many faces as pretty as hers, that did not look at all vain.

LUCY. True, so have I; then it must be from her thinking so much about her beauty.

MOTHER. Right. If Miss G. has a vain expression in her countenance (which for argument's sake we suppose) or whoever has such an expression, this must be the cause. Now we are come to the conclusion I expected, and I have proved my point.

LUCY. What point, mamma?

MOTHER. That you greatly over-rate the advantage, or mistake the nature of it, of our thoughts being concealed from our fellow-creatures. Since it appears, that the thoughts—at least, *our habits of thought*, so greatly influence the conduct, manners, and appearance, that our secret weaknesses are as

effectually betrayed to all discerning eyes, as if our inmost feelings were actually visible.

LUCY. But surely there are some people so deep and artful, that nobody can possibly guess what passes in their minds? Not that I should wish to be such an one.

MOTHER. They may, and do, indeed, often succeed in deceiving others in particular instances; but they cannot conceal their true characters; every one knows that they are deep and artful, and therefore their grand purpose is defeated; they are neither esteemed nor trusted.

LUCY. Well, but still mamma, to-day, for instance, do you really suppose that Mrs. and Miss G. had any idea of the opinion I formed of them?

MOTHER. Indeed, my dear, I dare say Mrs. and Miss G. did not take the trouble to think about you, or your opinions: but supposing they had chanced to observe you, I think, most likely, they would have formed an unfavourable idea.

LUCY. Why so, mamma?

MOTHER. Let us suppose that any other young girl of your own age had been present, and that while you were making your ill-natured observations on these ladies, your companion had been listening with sympathy and kindness to the account Mrs. G. was giving of her troubles and complaints; and wishing she could relieve or assist her. Do you not imagine that in this case, the tone of her voice,

the expression of her countenance would have been more gentle and kind and agreeable than yours? And do not you think that these ladies, if they had taken the trouble, could have discerned the difference?

LUCY. I dare say they would have liked her the best.

MOTHER. Doubtless. But suppose instead of this being a single instance, as I would hope it is, suppose you were in the habit of making such impertinent observations, and of forming these uncharitable opinions of every body that came in your way?

LUCY. Then I should get a sharp satirical look, and every body would dislike me.

MOTHER. Yes, as certainly as if you thought aloud.

LUCY. Only that would be rather worse.

MOTHER. In some respects it would be rather better; there would, at least, be something honest in it; instead of that hateful and unsuccessful duplicity, which, while all uncharitableness is indulged within, renders the exterior all friendship and cordiality. And that is but a poor, mean, ungenerous kind of satisfaction at best, Lucy, which arises from the hope that others do not know how vain, how selfish, how censorious we are.

LUCY. Yes, I know that; but yet—

MOTHER. But yet, you mean to say, I suppose, that you cannot exactly think as I do about it: and

the reason is, that you have not thought sufficiently upon the subject, nor observed enough of yourself and of others, to enter fully into my ideas. But when you are capable of making more accurate observations on what passes in your own mind, you will find, that our estimation of those around us is not so much formed upon their outward actions, nor their common conversation, as upon those slight, involuntary turns of countenance or of expression, which escape them unawares, which betray their inmost thoughts, and lay their hearts open to our view; and by which, in fact, we decide upon their characters, and regulate the measure of our esteem.

LUCY. Then what is one to do, mother?

MOTHER. Nothing can be plainer: there is but one way for us, Lucy, if we desire the esteem of others. Let our thoughts be always *fit to be seen*: let them be such as to impart to our countenance, our manners, our conduct, that which is generous candid, honest, and amiable.

LUCY. But that would be very difficult.

MOTHER. Not if it be attempted in the right way. It would be difficult, and indeed quite impossible, to restrain all foolish and evil thoughts with a direct view to be admired or approved by our fellow-creatures: but if we resolve to do so in the fear of God, from a recollection that He "searches and knows us, and understands our thoughts afar off," we shall find assistance and motive; and success

will certainly follow. If, like David, we hate "vain thoughts," because God hates them, we shall not suffer them to "lodge within us;" but shall desire as the apostle did, to bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." Thus, you see, the argument terminates where most of our discussions do; for whatever is amiss in us, there is but one remedy.

Let us entreat God to change our evil hearts; to make them pure and holy; to cleanse them from vanity, selfishness, and uncharitableness; and then all subordinate good consequences will follow. We shall enjoy the esteem and good-will of our fellow creatures, while ensuring that which is of infinitely greater consequence, the approbation of our own conscience, and of Him "whose favour is better than life."

## XVIII.

### COMPLAINT OF THE DYING YEAR.

RECLINING on a couch of fallen leaves, wrapped in a fleecy mantle, with withered limbs, hoarse voice, and snowy beard, behold a venerable man. His

pulses beat feebly; his breath becomes shorter; he exhibits every mark of approaching dissolution. This is old *Eighteen Hundred and Seventeen*; and as our readers must all remember him a young man, as rosy and blithsome as themselves, they will, perhaps, feel interested in hearing some of his dying expressions, together with a few particulars of his past life. His existence is still likely to be prolonged a few weeks by the presence of his daughter *December*, the last and sole survivor of his twelve fair children; and it is thought the father and daughter will expire together. The following are some of the expressions which have been taken down just as they fell from his dying lips: any want of order or accuracy will, therefore, be excused.

"I am," said he, "the son of old father *Time*, and the last of a numerous progeny; for he has had no less than five thousand eight hundred and seventeen of us; but it has ever been his fate to see one child expire before another was born. It is the opinion of some, that his own constitution is beginning to break up; and that when he has given birth to a hundred or two more of us, his family being complete, he himself will be no more.

"Alas! how have I been deceived! like other youngsters I was sanguine and credulous in early life; and no wonder: for in my youthful days I received nothing but flattery and adulation, with the fairest promises of respect and good treatment. I

heard that my poor brother and predecessor had been very ill used: this they confessed, while they declared their intentions to behave better to me. I have been told, that on the morning of my birth, nothing was heard but the language of joy and congratulation. It was a season of general festivity: every face beamed with pleasure; all was hope and expectation. In some places the event was announced by the ringing of bells: in others, it was recognized by solemn thanksgivings and hymns of praise. My name was sounded in every social circle, and my appearance was acknowledged in many a retired chamber. It was not, indeed, on those outward and noisy demonstrations of joy that my highest hopes were founded; but rather from the many private assurances, and even solemn vows and promises I received, from one and another, of being well treated, duly appreciated, and properly employed. It was at this time that I heard so much of their ill conduct towards my late brother; how his property had been squandered, and his gifts undervalued; while, as the best and only compensation they could make for this behaviour, I was to receive double attention and unabating respect. I could not but felicitate myself upon having made my appearance at so favourable a juncture, when so many seemed sensible of my value, and agreed as with one consent to do me justice. It was thus, in good humour with myself and my dependants, that I



commenced my sanguine career; and moving onward in my swift but regular course, began to distribute of my substance as I passed. Though it is true that I gave but little at a time, yet my donations were so perpetual that all who stood ready to receive as I dealt them out, might have become rich: but very early in my career I began to experience considerable disappointment from observing, that although I was still spoken of in terms of general respect, yet that my individual gifts were despised or misemployed. Many of my precious moments have I seen thrown away with great contempt, as of no value, although they were of the very same quality as those weeks and months of which they still continued to acknowledge the importance."

Here the Old Year called for his account books, and turned over the pages with a sorrowful eye. He has kept, it appears, an accurate register of the moments, minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months which he has issued; and subjoined, in some places, notices of the use to which they have been applied. These particulars it would be tedious to detail; perhaps the recollection of our readers may furnish them as well. But we must notice one circumstance: upon turning to a certain page in his accounts, the old man was much affected, and the tears streamed down his furrowed cheek. This was no other than the register of the forty-eight Sundays which he has already issued; and which, of all the

wealth he had to dispose of, has been, it appears, the most scandalously wasted. "These," said he, "were my most precious gifts. I had but fifty-two of them: alas! how lightly have they been esteemed." Here, upon referring back to certain old memorandums, he found a long list of vows and resolutions which had a particular reference to these fifty-two Sundays. This, with a mingled emotion of grief and anger, he tore into a hundred pieces, and threw them on the embers, by which he was endeavouring to warm his shivering limbs.

"And yet I feel," said he, "more pity than indignation towards these unhappy offenders; they were far greater enemies to themselves than to me. But there are a few outrageous ones, by whom I have been defrauded of so much of my substance, that it is difficult to think of them with patience; that notorious thief *Procrastination*, for instance, of whom every body has heard, and who is well known to have wronged my venerable father of so much of his property. There are also three noted pick-pockets, *Sleep*, *Sloth*, and *Pleasure*, from whom I have suffered much: besides a certain busy-body called *Dress*, who under the pretence of making the most of me, and taking great care of my gifts, steals away more of my property than any two of them."

"As for me, all must acknowledge that I have performed my part towards friends and foes. I have fulfilled my utmost promise, and been more

bountiful than many of my predecessors. My twelve fair children have, each in turn, aided my exertions: and their various tastes and dispositions have all conduced to the general good. Mild *February*, who sprinkled the naked boughs with delicate buds, and brought her wonted offering of early flowers, was not of more essential service than that rude, blustering boy, *March*, who though violent in his temper, was well intentioned and useful. *April*, a gentle, tender-hearted girl, wept his loss, yet cheered me with many a smile. *June* came crowned with roses, and sparkling in sun-beams, and laid up a store of costly ornaments for her luxuriant successors. But I cannot stay to enumerate the graces and good qualities of all my children. You, my poor *December*, dark in your complexion, and cold in your temper, greatly resemble my first-born *January*, with this difference, that he was most prone to anticipation, and you to reflection."

"If there should be any, who, upon hearing my dying lamentation, may feel regret that they have not treated me more kindly, I would beg leave to hint, that it is still possible to make some compensation for their past conduct, by rendering me, during my few remaining days, as much service as may yet be in their power: let them testify the sincerity of their sorrow by an immediate alteration in their behaviour. It would give me particular pleasure to see my only surviving child treated with respect:

let no one slight her offerings: she has a considerable part of my property still to dispose of, which, if well employed, will turn to good account. Not to mention the rest, there are four precious Sundays yet in her gift; it would cheer my last moments to know that these had been better prized than the past."

"It is very likely, at least after my decease, that many may reflect upon themselves for their misconduct towards me. To such I would leave it as my dying injunction, not to waste time in unavailing regret; all their wishes and repentance will not recal me to life. I shall never, never return! I would rather earnestly recommend to their regard my youthful successor, whose appearance is shortly expected: I cannot hope to survive long enough to introduce him: but I would fain hope that he will meet with a favourable reception; and that in addition to the flattering honours which greeted my birth, and the fair promises which deceived my hopes, more diligent exertion, more persevering effort may be employed. Let it be remembered, that one honest endeavour is worth ten fair promises."

Having thus spoken, the Old Year fell back on his couch, nearly exhausted; and trembling so violently as to shake the last shower of golden leaves from his canopy. Let us all hasten to testify our gratitude for his services, and repentance for

our abuse of them, by improving the few remaining days of his existence, and by remembering the solemn promises we made him in his youth. This is the best preparation we can make for his expected successor.

## XIX.

## ECCLESIASTES XI. 8.

*" If a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many."*

" TRULY the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun ;" and perhaps the truth of the remark is never felt more forcibly than on a New Year's morning. Not the brilliancy of a summer's sun can excite a more cheerful feeling than his aspect on a fine winter's day, especially a that season when festive pleasures and holiday feelings impart imaginary charms to every object. With the New Year we seem to begin life anew ; and forgetting that we are, in fact, advanced so much further on our course, we are apt to imagine that a period is added rather than lost to us. The pains, the

fears, the mistakes, the follies of the past are forgotten; at least we hope now to escape or avoid them, because it is a *New Year*. Thus, it is hope rather than sunshine, that inspires us with cheerfulness, while dismissing the painful remembrance of past disappointments, we anticipate the unknown advantages and pleasures of the untried future. It is right and wise to rejoice, with a thankful and cheerful heart, in the circumstances of comfort which surround us; especially let us acknowledge the goodness of our heavenly Father, in sparing us to behold the cheerful beams of another New Year's sun. In this temper, it is truly "a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold it."

There is, however, a peculiar suitableness, at this season, in the admonitory words of our motto; namely, to "remember the days of darkness." The preacher here, for argument's sake, supposes a very improbable case; that is, that a man who lives many years, may rejoice in them all. None knew better than King Solomon himself that such a thing never happens; for he, who possessed every thing in this world in which a man may rejoice, declared that "all was vanity and vexation of spirit." But, though well aware of this, he chooses to admit the possibility of such a circumstance, in order to meet every objection. He considered, perhaps, that the young, to whom he addressed himself, would not think it so unlikely as he did. "Suppose then," he

says, "that a man should have a long life of uninterrupted happiness, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they are many;" and this is the reason why it is so very important to remember them.

By "the days of darkness" we are to understand the state of the dead. But when Solomon wrote this passage, perhaps he himself did not apprehend how long a period, how "many days," he should spend in the region of darkness. What a succession of ages have rolled away since he first "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the sepulchre of the kings!" Once he rejoiced in the light, and thought it a pleasant thing to behold the sun; but how many suns have risen and set behind "the mountains that are round about Jerusalem," since the days of darkness came upon him! How wise, then, was he to remember those days, to realize their coming, and to anticipate their long duration!

The young sometimes plead the length of life as an excuse for putting off these recollections. But how much wiser it would be to consider rather the length of that "night, in which no man can work!" We need not go so far back as the days of Solomon, in order to be convinced of this. Let our thoughts only recur to a comparatively recent time, the beginning of the last century, for instance: the literature of the day makes us well acquainted with the period. We are quite familiar with that generation:

their thoughts, their feelings, manners and habits, their hopes and fears, were much like our own. We can easily realize a family party assembled around the blazing fire of our great-grand-sires, on the New Year's morning of one thousand seven hundred and eighteen. By the aid of a little imagination, we can substitute the huge carved mantel-piece, adorned with grotesque figures and rich china jars, for our light classic marble, and tasty chimney ornaments; and then we may fancy their cheerful looks, and friendly salutations, as the compliments of the season were interchanged. The young faces *then*, like the young faces *now*, beaming with hope and joy, and looking forward to a long series of new and happy years: and yet it is of these once gay and youthful beings that we must now say, "Our fathers where are they?" They looked forward to distant times, but did they look quite far enough? They thought, perhaps, of ten, twenty, or fifty years to come; but did their thoughts extend to a hundred?—Did they think of the year 1818, when all to them would be over; when all they hoped, feared, and enjoyed, would be forgotten?—did they remember "the days of darkness?"—It is of no importance to *us* to answer this question: probably it was then, as it is now, the *few* did, and the *many* did *not* "so number their days as to apply their hearts to wisdom."

But let us turn from the past to the present; and ask, do *we* so number them? The next age, and



new generations, will as certainly come to sweep us and ours away, and to occupy our stations, as we have taken possession of those of our forefathers. The social circles who assemble on the New Year's morning of 1918, will not probably even pay us the compliment of recollecting that we ever existed : or should such a thought arise, it will be, perhaps, only to laugh at our old fashions and antiquated customs ; or to congratulate themselves upon living in a more advanced and happy state of society. Some few, it may be, will moralize upon the past age ; reflect how that generation has passed away, and charitably hope that they were wise enough, while they saw the light, " to remember the days of darkness."

But is this wisdom ours ? Do we realize those days ? Do we frequently call off our thoughts from the objects which surround us, and summon them to these solemn recollections ? A new year reminds us of the quick passage of life. It is now truly seasonable to consider our latter end. We have all been recently reminded, in the most affecting manner, how soon " the flower may fade." Every youth in Britain has been solemnly, and, as it were, personally addressed by the awful voice of this providence. What young heart had not sympathized with England's fair Princess, in her distinguished lot and splendid prospects ? How many of our readers have formerly amused themselves with imagining, if

*they* were in her place, what *they* should feel, and what *they* would do?—And now, it appears, that if they had been, the wisest and best thing that they could have thought or done, would have been to “remember the days of darkness!” Let those whose imaginations have often visited her in her spacious palace, now pursue her to the dark and lonesome sepulchre; not one ray of “sweet light,” nor of that “pleasant sun,” which still shines on her deserted mansion, can penetrate to those gloomy vaults. The “days of darkness” are come upon her.

But to what purpose should we indulge these contemplations? not as an idle speculation; not for the sake of melancholy brooding; not to compare our own situation with her's, and to congratulate ourselves that we are not now as she is: but on the contrary, to recollect our own mortality, and to reflect that, although we could not partake the honours of her former station, we shall assuredly share the darkness of her present abode; not indeed in a spacious mausoleum, but in some humble grave.

“Well, if our days must fly,  
We'll keep their end in sight,  
We'll spend them all in wisdom's way,  
And let them speed their flight.”

This is the moral of the whole: and how cheering

is the thought to which it leads! If we are Christians, light dawns upon the darkness of death itself, and penetrates even to the tomb. Then we may say, "O grave, where is thy victory!" and, in this cheerful song, the prince and the peasant may unite.

While we remember, then, the days of darkness, let it be in order to lead our thoughts, our desires, our endeavours, our *ambition*, towards a land of light and glory. "The night cometh, but also the morning." The night of death is dark, but the morning of the resurrection will break with inconceivable brightness, and how pleasant will it be to our eyes to behold *that* light! The days of darkness will be past for ever when "the new heavens and the new earth" appear. "There will be no night there;" and "there will be no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God and of the Lamb will be the light thereof."

## XX.

### THEORY AND PRACTICE.

ONE evening, during the vacation, Frank, a tall school boy, amused his younger brother Harry, by reading an essay which had gained him the first prize at school. The subject was *Self Denial*. Frank was a clever lad, and had acquitted himself very well. He represented his subject in so striking a light, that it made a considerable impression on the mind of his young auditor; who, as soon as it was finished, thanked his brother for his good advice, and expressed a determination of endeavouring to profit by it.—“I am afraid,” said he, “I have never learned to deny myself as I ought; but I hope, brother Frank, that I shall not forget this lesson of yours; I wish now you would be so kind as to give me some more good hints on the subject.”

Now Frank, not considering this the best possible compliment that could be paid to his composition, felt disappointed that, instead of commenting upon the force of his arguments, or the graces of his style, he should begin gravely to moralize about it: and it confirmed him in a favourite opinion of his,

that his brother Harry had not a spark of *genius*, nor ever would have.

Harry repeated his request; but finding his brother more inclined to discuss the merits, and relate the success of his essay, than to draw a practical improvement from it, he contented himself with his own private resolutions. "To-morrow," said he to himself, "to-morrow morning I will begin.—But why not begin to night?"—The clock had just struck, and Harry recollected that his mother had desired them not to sit up a minute after the clock struck nine. He reminded his brother of this order. "Never mind," said Frank—"here's a famous fire, and I shall stay and enjoy it."—"Yes," said Harry, "here's a famous fire, and I should *like* to stay and enjoy it; but that would not be self-denial, would it Frank?"

"Nonsense!" said Frank,—“I shall not stir yet, I promise you.”—"Then good night to you," said Harry.

Now, whether his brother was correct in his opinion of Harry's want of genius, we shall not stay to inquire: indeed it is a question of very little importance, either to us or to him; since it cannot be denied, that his reflections, and his conduct, on this occasion, displayed good sense, good principle, and strength of character: and these are sterling qualities, for which the brightest sparks of genius would be a poor exchange.

Six o'clock was the time at which Harry was expected to rise ; but not unfrequently since the cold weather set in, he had indulged an hour longer. When it struck six next morning, he started up, but the air felt so frosty, that he had a strong inclination to lie down again.—“ But no ! ” thought he—“ here is a fine opportunity for self-denial ; and up he jumped without further hesitation.”

“ Frank, Frank,” said he to his sleeping brother—“ past six o'clock, and a fine star-light morning.”

“ Let me alone,” cried Frank, in a cross, drowsy voice,—“ Very well, then ; a pleasant nap to you,” said Harry, and down he ran as gay as a lark.

After finishing his Latin exercise, he had time to take a pleasant walk before breakfast this morning ; so that he came in fresh and rosy ; with a good appetite ; and, what was still better, in a good humour.

But, poor Frank, who had just tumbled out of bed when the bell rang for prayer, came down, looking pale, and cross, and cold, and discontented.—Harry, who, if he had no genius, had some sly drolery of his own, was just beginning to rally him on his forlorn appearance, when he recollected his resolution—“ Frank does not like to be laughed at, especially when he is cross,” thought he ; so he suppressed his joke ; and it requires some self-denial, even to suppress a joke.

During breakfast, his father promised that if the

weather continued fine, Harry should ride out with him before dinner on the grey pony. Harry was much delighted with this proposal, and the thought of it occurred to him very often during the business of the morning. The sun shone cheerily in at the parlour windows, and seemed to promise fair for a fine day. About noon, however, it became rather cloudy, and Harry was somewhat startled to perceive a few large drops upon the flag-stones in the court: he equipped himself, nevertheless, in his great coat at the time appointed, and stood playing with his whip in the hall, waiting to see the horses led out. His mother now passing by, said, "My dear boy, I am afraid there can be no riding this morning; do you see that the stones are quite wet?"—"Dear mother," said Harry, "you surely do not imagine that I am afraid of a few drops of rain!—besides, I don't believe it rains at all now." "It seems to me to be coming up very heavy from the South," said his mother.—"It will be no more than a shower at any rate," replied Harry. Just then his father came in; who looked first at the clouds, then at the barometer, then at Harry, and shook his head.

"You intend to go, papa, don't you?" said Harry.

"I must go, I have business to do; but I believe, Harry, it will be better for you to stay at home this morning," said his father.

"But, Sir," repeated Harry, "do you think it possible, now, that this little sprinkling of rain should do me the least harm in the world?—with my great coat, and all!"—"Yes, Harry," said his father, "I do think that even this sprinkling of rain may do you harm, as you have not been quite well: I think, too, it will be more than a sprinkling. But you shall decide, on this occasion, for yourself. I know you have some self-command. I shall only tell you that your going this morning would make your mother uneasy; and that we both think it improper;—now determine."

Harry again looked at the clouds; at the stones; at his boots; and, last of all, at his kind mother, and then he recollected himself:—"This," thought he, "is the best opportunity for self-denial that I have had to-day; and he immediately ran out to tell Roger that he need not saddle the grey pony."

"I should like another half, I think, mother," said Frank, that day at dinner, just as he had dispatched a large hemisphere of mince pie.

"Any more for you, my dear Harry?" said his mother.

"If you please—no thank you, though," said Harry, withdrawing his plate, "for," thought he, "I have had enough, and more than enough to satisfy my hunger: and now is the time for self-denial."

"Brother Harry," said his little sister, after dinner,



"when will you show me how to do that pretty puzzle? you said you would, a long time ago."

"I am busy now, child," said Harry—"don't tease me now, there's a good girl."—She said no more, but looked disappointed, and still hung upon her brother's chair.—"Come, then," said he, suddenly recollecting himself; "bring me your puzzle;" and laying down his book, he very good naturedly shewed his little sister how to place it.

That night, when the two boys were going to bed, Harry called to mind, with some complacency, the several instances in the course of the day in which he had succeeded in exercising self-denial; and he was on the very point of enumerating them to his brother Frank.—"But no," thought he, "here is another opportunity still of denying myself; I will not say a word about it; besides, to boast of it, would spoil all."

So Harry laid down quietly; making the following sage reflections:—"This has been a pleasant day to me; although I have had one great disappointment in it, and done several things against my will. I find that self-denial is painful for a moment, but very agreeable in the end. If I go on this plan every day, I shall stand a good chance of having a happy life; for life is made up of days and hours, and it will be just as pleasant and as easy:"—but here Harry's thoughts began to wander, and soon became quite indistinct. In fact, he was sound

asleep before he had half finished his reflections; the remainder must be supplied by the reader.

One of them will, doubtless, be this—that self-denial is no *sinecure* virtue; nor one which may be reserved for a few great occasions in life; but that it is wanted every day, and every hour; that is, as often as we are tempted to self-indulgence.

## XXI.

## A FABLE.

AN idle weed that used to crawl  
Unseen behind the garden wall,  
    (Its most becoming station;)  
At last—refreshed by sun and showers,  
Which nourish weeds, as well as flowers—  
Amused its solitary hours  
    With thoughts of elevation.

Those thoughts encouraged day by day,  
It shot forth many an upward spray,  
    And many a tendril band;

But as it could not climb alone,  
It uttered oft a lazy groan  
To moss and mortar, stick and stone,  
To lend a helping hand.

At length, by friendly arms sustained,  
The aspiring vegetable gained  
The object of its labours :  
That which had cost her many a sigh,  
And nothing less would satisfy—  
Which was not only being *high*,  
But *higher* than her neighbours.

And now this weed, though weak, and spent  
With climbing up the steep ascent,  
Admired her figure tall :  
And then (for vanity ne'er ends  
With that which it at first intends)  
Began to laugh at those poor friends  
Who helped her up the wall.

But by and by, my lady spied  
The garden on the other side :  
And fallen was her crest,  
To see, in neat array below,  
A bed of all the flowers that blow—  
Lilly and rose—a goodly show,  
In fairest colours drest.

Recovering from her first surprise,  
She soon began to criticise;—

“ A dainty sight, indeed !

I'd be the meanest thing that blows,  
Rather than that affected rose ;

So much perfume offends my nose,”

Exclaimed the vulgar weed.

“ Well, 'tis enough to make one chilly,  
To see that pale consumptive lily

Among these painted folks.

Miss Tulip, too, looks wonderous odd,

She's gaping like a dying cod ;—

What a queer stick is golden-rod !

And how the violet pokes !

“ Not for the gayest tint that lingers  
On honey-suckle's rosy fingers,

Would I with her exchange :

For this, at least, is very clear,

Since they are *there*, and I am *here*,

I occupy a higher sphere—

Enjoy a wider range.”

Alas ! poor envious weed !—for lo,

That instant came the gardener's hoe,

And lopped her from her sphere :

But none lamented when she fell ;  
No passing Zephyr sighed farewell ;  
No friendly Bee would hum her knell ;  
No Fairy dropt a tear.

While those sweet flowers of genuine worth,  
Inclining toward the modest earth,  
Adorn the vale below :  
Content to hide in sylvan dells,  
Their rosy buds and purple bells ;  
Though scarce a rising Zephyr tells  
The secret where they grow.

## MORAL.

“ Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think.” What a vast alteration would take place in society if this reasonable rule were to be attended to ! If every one were to fall into his proper place in self-estimation (as he must eventually do in the estimation of others) how many mistakes—how much mortification would be prevented ! For it is in every sense true, that “ he that exalteth himself shall be abased.” They who value themselves on any account too highly, will certainly receive that humbling request from one of another—“ Friend, go down lower.” How wise,

then, how secure are they, who voluntarily take the lowest room:—

“He that is down need fear no fall.”

But it requires years and much experience to know ourselves: hence it is, that self-conceit is the fault of youth and ignorance; while we look for true modesty among the wise, the learned, and the venerable.

How much better would it be to learn our own insignificance by observation and reflection, than to have it discovered to us by our friends and neighbours. Yet it often requires very broad hints from those around us, before we even begin to suspect that we had rated ourselves too highly; and sometimes even this will not do: rather than suppose themselves mistaken, some will imagine all the world to be so; and conclude that their merits are overlooked. But this is a kind of injustice that rarely takes place in society: and if, owing to accidental circumstances, it should in any instance be the case that we are thought of more meanly than we deserve, let it ever be remembered, that nothing can be done on *our* parts to redress the grievance. In most cases, indeed, the more we can help ourselves the better; and he that would have his business done must do it himself; but *here* it is just the reverse. If we set but one step towards our own

exaltation, we shall assuredly have to take two or three downwards for our pains. To *deserve* esteem is in our power, but if we *claim* it, we cease to deserve, and shall certainly forfeit it.

Young people, at the period when they are acquiring knowledge, are very liable to self-conceit; and thus, by their own folly, defeat the great purpose of instruction; which is, not to make them vain, but wise. They are apt to forget that knowledge is not for show, but for use: and that the desire to exhibit what they know is invariably a proof that their acquirements are superficial.

Besides, like most other faults, self-conceit is no solitary failing, but ever brings many more in its train. They who are very desirous to shine themselves, are always envious of the attainments of others; and, like the weed in our fable, will be ingenious in discovering defects in those who are more accomplished than themselves. The vain have no rest unless they are uppermost; and more conspicuous than all around them. The most interesting pursuits cannot render retirement agreeable: concealment to them is wretchedness.

There is no generous sentiment, no amiable disposition, no warm affection, but is chilled and blighted by the secret influence of self-conceit: and perhaps, there are none who more frequently or more effectually transgress the spirit of that great commandment of the law—"to love our neighbour as our-

selves," than the vain. How many are there, who, while they would tremble at the idea of defrauding a companion of any part of her property, will not scruple to use a thousand little artifices to rival and supplant her in the opinion of others; thus endeavouring to rob her of that which she probably values much more.

There are three things which those who are conscious of indulging this fault would do well to remember:—

First, That self-conceit is always most apparent in persons of mean minds and superficial acquirements: a vain person may, indeed, be *clever*, but can never be wise or great.

Secondly, That however they may suppose this weakness to be concealed within their own bosoms, there is no fault that is really more conspicuous; or that it is more impossible to hide from the eyes of others.

Thirdly, That it is highly offensive in the sight of God; and wholly inimical to moral and religious improvement.

Now, is there any gaudy weed who would fain become a sterling flower? Let such be assured that this wish, if prompted by right motives, and followed up by sincere endeavours, will not be in vain. But let it be remembered, that such a change can never be effected by merely adopting the colours and affecting the attitudes of one. This would be but to



become an artificial flower at best; without the grace and fragrance of nature. Be not, then, reader, satisfied with *imitation*, which, after all, is more laborious and difficult than aiming at reality. *Be* what you would seem to be; this is the shortest, and the only successful way. Above all, “be clothed with humility; and have the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,”—for of *such* flowers it may truly be said, that, “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

## XXII.

## PSALM XXVII. 4.

*“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.”*

THIS language might be adopted, in part, with great sincerity by persons of every age, station, and character. It is by no means peculiar to the devout writer, nor to pious men to desire one thing above all others, and to seek after it with energy and diligence. Even the endless variety of trifling pursuits and vain desires which occupy the youthful mind may generally be comprehended under some

one object, towards the attainment of which they are all directed.

The "*one thing*" desired by some, and which in a thousand different ways they determine to seek after, is *admiration*. It is in pursuit of this object that many devote their hours and their energies to dress. Others, for the same purpose, to the acquirement of various accomplishments: and some, with no higher aim, will even be at the pains of storing their minds with useful knowledge. Others, again, will engage in the active offices of charity and benevolence; and (worst of all) are there not some who will even make a fair shew of religion itself, with no better object in view, than this "*one thing*," to obtain the applause and admiration of their fellow creatures?

There are many of a different temper of mind, who, amid a thousand changing pursuits and varying wishes, yet may be said to desire that "*one thing*," *pleasure*: and this according to their ages, tastes and opportunities, they eagerly seek after; in toys, in sports, in idleness, in feasting, in company: whatever be the particular means, still the grand aim, the "*one thing*" desired, is to please, and to enjoy themselves; "*that will they seek after.*"

There is a very large proportion of mankind with whom the "*one thing*" desired is *riches*. For this they rise early, and sit up late; and there are none who can more emphatically employ the language of

our text; none who more industriously and ardently seek after their object.

But there are some among the young as well as those of maturer age whose "*one thing*" is of a higher order than any of these;—some in whom natural taste, united with the advantages of education, has inspired a true love of knowledge; who thirst for mental improvement: their state of feeling is expressively described by Solomon, who had himself fully experienced it—"Through desire, a man having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom." How feelingly and ardently do such exclaim, "One thing have I desired, that will I seek after!"

Under these general heads it would be easy to enter into particulars; but this may be more profitably referred to the experience of the reader. Let each one inquire, what is the *one* important thing to which, at the present moment, all his thoughts and activity are directed. If it should happen to be something so trifling, so useless, so unworthy, or so silly, that they would be ashamed to specify it, yet let them not hesitate to detect and confess it to themselves; it might be useful to pause for an instant, and say, "So then, among all the important objects of pursuit which may engage the attention of an intelligent being, *this* is the 'one thing' which I have desired, and after which I am resolved, above all others to seek." Every one

indeed, who has observed, with any accuracy, the workings of his own mind, must be aware what intenseness of desire, what eagerness of pursuit are frequently devoted to things so essentially trifling that they weary or disgust as soon as they are possessed.

But now, with regard to all the *desirers* and *seekers* that have been alluded to, whether their attention be directed to vain and trifling, or to lawful and rational objects of pursuit, yet if their aims rise no higher, how suitable is that remark once made to as amiable and hopeful a young person as any who will peruse this page; “*One thing thou lackest.*”

Let us then, first inquire, what is that “one thing” which David in the text desires of the Lord; and, secondly, consider the means he employed for the fulfilment of this desire. Now, the remainder of the verse fully explains that the grand object of the holy Psalmist’s ambition was no other than the “one thing needful.”—“One thing have I desired of the Lord,” he says, “that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” That is, he wishes above all things, to be a servant of God, and to live a life of holy obedience, and of communion with him. What an unspeakable difference between this desire and all others, however lawful or reasonable! Earthly hopes, the very best of them, are liable to disappointment,

are founded on uncertainty, and frequently terminate in mortification and disgust. But this one, if sincere, will not only be certainly fulfilled, but when attained, will fully satisfy, and even surpass expectation; besides that it includes in it all that is really good in our earthly wishes. Let us examine it more particularly.

*“That I may dwell in the house of the Lord;”—* that is, he hoped to be continually favoured with the outward means of grace; those means which we are so apt to undervalue. It was no weariness to David to go up to the house of the Lord, but his delight. How much more profitable would the services of religion be if this feeling were more general! if we were to attend them expecting and desiring spiritual blessings! And observe, David desired to dwell there “all the days of his life,” not only in his declining days, when he should have done with the affairs of the world; but during his years of health and vigour; and when, if he had wanted to make excuse, he had the splendours of the court and the business of the state to dissipate his thoughts, and occupy his time. Happy they who thus desire to be early “planted in the house of the Lord;” for such only are likely to “*flourish* in the courts of their God.” Nor should any expect to bring forth much fruit in old age, but those who, like David, desire to dwell there all their days.

But his object was “to behold the beauty of the

Lord :” this indeed is the sum of true religion ; for when once the eyes of the mind are spiritually enlightened to perceive His infinite excellence, the desires will be no longer going after earthly good. It is only from blindness that we love creatures more than God. It was in consequence of thus beholding His beauty that David not only could say “ Whom have I in heaven but thee !” but was able to add, what is far more difficult, “ there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” It is the most lamentable consequence of our depraved nature to hide God and his perfections from our view. And although we behold so much of his glory in the works of his hands—for “ all his works praise him,” and so much of his bounty and goodness in the conduct of his providence—for “ he openeth his hand and satisfieth the desires of every living thing,” yet we see him not, we know him not, our hearts are at enmity with him, and we perceive “ no beauty in him that we should desire him,” till he “ lift up the light of his countenance upon us : then we behold the beauty of the Lord.”

And having once had a glimpse of His excellence, it will be our chief business and pleasure “ to inquire in His temple ;” to wait at the posts of His doors : to learn His will, to do His commandments, and to be taught the whole of His truth. The more we know of God, the more we shall desire to know.

But secondly ; what means did David employ for

the attainment of that "one thing" which he desired? First, he desired it "*of the Lord*;" secondly, he determined to "*seek after it*;" that is, he *prayed* and he *endeavoured*. These means united ensured his success. How many fail and come short in religion from neglecting one, or the other, or both! Desires after some acquaintance with God, and for a religious life, are very common. Few indeed, if any, who have had religious instruction, but have known some wishes of this nature. And why is it that they so frequently become fainter and fainter till at last they disappear amid the cares and pleasures of this life, but because they were not accompanied by *prayer*, and *endeavour*;  *fervent prayer* and *persevering endeavour*? This only can be the reason; for the promise is explicit and unqualified, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find;"—"He is the rewarder of them that *diligently seek him*." Therefore it is most certain, that if any remain ignorant of God; unconscious of their need; and unacquainted with Jesus and the way of salvation; or if they are cold and lifeless in religion, it is because they have not made known their desires to the Lord, nor effectively determined to seek after him.

This subject affords encouragement to those who are conscious of lively desires and sincere determinations of devoting themselves to the service of God. If, after counting the cost, and looking round upon

the pleasures and attractions of the world, any one can humbly say, in the meaning of the text, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after," let them not fear but he will give them "the desires of their hearts." As to such as have no other than languid, indolent, ineffective desires after religion, (and this, it is to be feared is the case with a large proportion of young people in the religious world,) let them be stimulated by this subject to earnestness and activity; remembering that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength;" and to encourage the most backward, it is added, "to them that have *no might* he increaseth strength." But if another should say, "Alas; I have no desires towards religion," let such go and intreat the Lord to awaken good desires in their cold, worldly hearts; and they shall "not be sent empty away."



## XXIII.

### ON INTELLECTUAL TASTE.

WHEN Adam and Eve first awoke to existence, and beheld the fair creation, it is not very difficult to imagine what must have been the principal subjects of their thoughts, and their discourse. The Scriptures, which never descend to those particulars which are merely calculated to gratify curiosity, are silent on this subject. Yet we may infer, without any doubt, that the perfections of their Maker were the primary objects of their regard: and that to adore and praise him was their highest and most delightful employment. Next to this, we may reasonably conclude, that their attention was awakened to a contemplation of His works; both in admiration of their grandeur and beauty, and in investigating their principles and laws. When the sun, descending in a golden mist, sunk behind the groves of Paradise, can we suppose that our first parents were unaffected by the sublimity of the spectacle? or that they beheld without emotions of wonder, and delight, and intelligent curiosity, the moon rising in her beauty, and shedding her tender light on their peaceful plains?

When they arose at early dawn from tranquil sleep, while the morning stars yet sang together, would not they feel disposed, like all the sons of God, to shout for joy?

The representations of our great Poet on this subject, although they claim not the authority of direct inspiration, yet, are so natural and affecting, that we can scarcely suppose them to differ widely from the reality. When,

“——Morn her rosy steps in th’ eastern clime  
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,”

Milton supposes the innocent and happy pair to unite in that sublime hymn in which the “glorious works” of the “Parent of good” are invited to be “vocal in His praise.” In this, and in all their discourses, he represents them as susceptible of the refined pleasures of taste, and alive to high intellectual enjoyments. Indeed, to suppose them insensible to the beauties of creation, indifferent and inattentive to the grand phenomena of nature, would be to conclude, that instead of being formed rational and intelligent, they were sent into existence in the condition of untaught savages. It is true, that even during their state of innocency, they were not exempt from manual employments. For although the ground, before the curse, brought forth neither thorns nor briers, yet Adam, we are told, was placed in the garden to till it, and to dress it; and Eve

had, doubtless, her appropriate task in preparing the simple meal, adorning the leafy bower, and tending the luxuriant growth of her fruits and flowers. But that these domestic offices did not engross her so much as to diminish her taste for more elevated pursuits, is beautifully intimated by the Poet: when after relating how—modestly retiring from the philosophical discourse between the angel and Adam—she,

“——Went forth among her fruits and flowers,  
To visit how they prospered;——

he adds,

“Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
Delighted, or not capable her ear  
Of what was high.”

That such were the feelings and interests of our first parents, few will dispute: for it would have been strange, indeed, if, under such favourable circumstances, when all to them was new, and when they were just come from the hands of their Creator, perfect and intelligent, they had been unmindful of Him, and of his works. This being granted, may it not fairly be inquired whether any such essential difference exists between their circumstances and ours, as to render a meaner taste, and lower objects of pursuit reasonable in us their descendants?

To young people just awaking from the dreams

of childhood, and becoming capable of observation and reflection, is not this fair world with the interesting phenomena of nature, in fact, as new as it was to its first inhabitants? Have not they also every thing to see, to investigate, and to admire? True, this earth has now existed nearly six thousand years; and the works of nature have been explored and admired by the intellectual of mankind, in every successive generation. Yet, to the youth of *this* generation, it is as it were a new creation: the young are new to themselves; and all that surrounds them is novel. The language of Adam, describing his emotions upon first starting into being, may be adopted by every truly intelligent young person, in reference to the time when they first began to think and to observe.

“ Straight toward heaven my wondering eyes I turned,  
And gazed awhile the ample sky:————  
————About me round I saw  
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these  
Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew;  
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled;  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflowed.  
Myself I then perused.”

And happy they, who like him, discerning the great Creator in his works, sum up all by exclaiming,

“ Tell me how I may know Him, how adore !”

But is it not equally strange and lamentable, when, so far from admiration being awakened, and curiosity excited by the beautiful and sublime objects of creation, and the great secrets of nature, the mind is satisfied with the most trifling pursuits and childish amusements?—when alternate attention to dress, visiting, and superficial acquirements, are suffered to engross all the time, or at least to engage all the interest?

If Milton had represented our mother Eve, when not occupied by the concerns of the domestic bower, as devoting her leisure hours to binding flowers in wreaths and garlands, wherewith to adorn herself—if he had told us that she and Adam spent their evenings in playing with pebbles, dancing on the turf, or in idle conversation; and that they rose and retired to rest without any devout acknowledgments to their Maker; we should certainly have considered it a most absurd, unfair, and degrading representation, even after they had fallen from their first estate. Yet how many of their descendants are there, even in the most civilized and evangelized parts of the globe, whose time is spent to no better purpose! A young lady who rises without prayer, or with only a heartless and formal performance of it, who spends her morning in preparing ornaments of dress, or in pursuits equally trifling, and devotes her evening to gay amusements, or even to the more creditable recreation of sober visiting, and returning weary or dissipated, forgets to call upon God, is

surely no less unmindful of the dignity of her nature, and the great ends of her existence.

Perhaps the subjoined stanzas may serve to illustrate our subject, by exemplifying the difference between a trifling and an intellectual taste.

It was a pleasant winter's night ;  
The sky was clear and the stars were bright,  
The air was fresh and cold ;  
But all within was warm and tight ;  
And the fire-flame cast a flashing light  
On the carpet red, and the ceiling white,  
And on the curtain-fold.

Here Anne and Martha idly sit,  
Because the candles are not lit,  
And both are tired of play ;  
And Anne was tired of Martha's chat  
About the trimming to her hat,  
For her mother had said (she was sure of that)  
She would trim their hats that day.

So rising as quickly as she could,  
Anne went to the window, and there she stood :  
The sash, which reached the floor, displayed  
To view the pleasant garden-shade ;  
For the curtains were not drawn.  
And she was pleased to stand and see  
The moon shine on the laurel tree :—

How, when the wind the foliage heaves,  
It sparkles on the glossy leaves ;  
And what soft light and shade were shed  
On every bush and every bed ;  
And what a sheet of light was spread  
Over the level lawn.

Then roved her eye from star to star,  
And soon her thought had fled as far ;  
For thought has neither chain nor bar,  
It ranges fair and free :  
And as she had not wings to fly  
Amid the starry realms on high,  
She marvelled that a mortal eye  
Those distant worlds could see.

Their gentle mother enters now,  
And pleasure gladdens Martha's brow ;  
For lo ! on either hand she bears  
With tender touch, these hats of theirs ;  
While in her basket store is seen  
Some glossy yards of ribbon green ;  
And having now unrolled it—  
She forms the bow, she twines the band ;  
Behold, with light and dexterous hand ;  
And there does eager Martha stand,  
Suggesting this, approving that,  
And all her soul is in her hat  
( Full large enough to hold it.)

Nor think that thoughtful Anne defers  
To thank her mother, too, for her's :  
She came, and with a grateful look,  
And duteous word, her hat she took,  
    And bore it to its place :  
Yet that fair ribbon, bright and new,  
Scarce cared she if 'twas green or blue ;  
For now her mind was braced with thought,  
Some nobler happiness it sought  
Than 'ere, with nicest art, was wrought  
    With ribbon, pearl, or lace.

As years increased, still Anne inclined  
To train and cultivate her mind,  
    At reason's nobler voice :  
While Martha strove, with equal care,  
To deck her person light and fair :  
Now, reader, these pursuits compare,  
    Compare—and make your choice.



## .XXIV.

### SOLILOQUIES OF THE OLD PHILOSOPHER AND THE YOUNG LADY.

“ALAS!” exclaimed a silver-headed sage, “how narrow is the utmost extent of human knowledge! how circumscribed the sphere of intellectual exertion! I have spent my life in acquiring knowledge, but how little do I know! The farther I attempt to penetrate the secrets of nature, the more I am bewildered and benighted. Beyond a certain limit all is but confusion or conjecture: so that the advantage of the learned over the ignorant consists greatly in having ascertained how little is to be known.

“It is true that I can measure the sun; and compute the distances of the planets: I can calculate their periodical movements; and even ascertain the laws by which they perform their sublime revolutions: but with regard to their construction, to the beings which inhabit them, of their condition and circumstances, whether natural or moral, what do I know more than the clown?

“Delighting to examine the economy of nature

in our own world, I have analyzed the elements; and have given names to their component parts. And yet, should I not be as much at a loss to explain the burning of fire, or to account for the liquid quality of water, as the vulgar who use and enjoy them without thought or examination?

“I remark that all bodies, unsupported, fall to the ground; and I am taught to account for this by the law of gravitation. But what have I gained here more than a term? Does it convey to my mind any idea of the nature of that mysterious and invisible chain, which draws all things to a common centre? I observe the effect, I give a name to the cause, but can I explain or comprehend it?

“Pursuing the track of the Naturalist, I have learned to distinguish the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms; and to divide these into their distinct tribes and families:—but can I tell, after all this toil, whence a single blade of grass derives its vitality?—Could the most minute researches enable me to discover the exquisite pencil that paints and fringes the flower of the field?—have I ever detected the secret that gives their brilliant dye to the ruby and the emerald, or the art that enamels the delicate shell?

“I observe the sagacity of animals; I call it instinct, and speculate upon its various degrees of approximation to the reason of man. But, after all, I know as little of the cogitations of the brute

as he does of mine. When I see a flight of birds overhead, performing their evolutions, or steering their course to some distant settlement, their signals and cries are as unintelligible to me as are the learned languages to the unlettered mechanic: I understand as little of their policy and laws as they do of Blackstone's Commentaries.

“ But leaving the material creation, my thoughts have often ascended to loftier subjects, and indulged in metaphysical speculation. And here, while I easily perceive in myself the two distinct qualities of matter and mind, I am baffled in every attempt to comprehend their mutual dependance and mysterious connection. When my hand moves in obedience to my will, have I the most distant conception of the manner in which the volition is either communicated or understood? Thus in the exercise of one of the most simple and ordinary actions, I am perplexed and confounded, if I attempt to account for it.

“ Again, how many years of my life were devoted to the acquisition of those languages, by the means of which I might explore the records of remote ages, and become familiar with the learning and literature of other times! and what have I gathered from these but the mortifying fact, that man has ever been struggling with his own impotence, and vainly endeavouring to overleap the bounds which limit his anxious inquiries?

“ Alas ! then, what have I gained by my laborious researches but a humbling conviction of my weakness and ignorance ? of how little has man, at his best estate, to boast ! what folly in him to glory in his contracted powers, or to value himself upon his imperfect acquisitions ! ”

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“ Well ! ” exclaimed a young lady, just returned from school, “ my education is at last finished : indeed it would be strange, if, after five years’ hard application, any thing were left incomplete. Happily that it is all over now ; and I have nothing to do, but to exercise my various accomplishments.

“ Let me see !—as to French, I am mistress of that, and speak it, if possible, with more fluency than English. Italian I can read with ease, and pronounce very well : as well at least, and better, than any of my friends ; and that is all one need wish for in Italian. Music I have learned till I am perfectly sick of it. But, now that we have a grand piano, it will be delightful to play when we have company. I must still continue to practise a little ;—the only thing, I think, that I need now to improve myself in. And then there are my Italian songs ! which every body allows I sing with taste, and as it is what so few people can pretend to, I am particularly glad that I can.

“My drawings are universally admired: especially the shells and flowers; which are beautiful, certainly: besides this, I have a decided taste in all kinds of fancy ornaments.

“And then my dancing and waltzing! in which our master himself owned that he could take me no further;—just the figure for it certainly;—it would be unpardonable if I did not excel.

“As to *common* things, geography, and history, and poetry, and philosophy, thank my stars, I have got through them all! so that I may consider myself not only perfectly accomplished, but also thoroughly well informed.

“Well, to be sure, how much I have fagged through; the only wonder is that one head can contain it all!”

## XXV.

### THE WISE MAN.

FREDERIC and Philip, with their sisters Julia and Kate, were amusing themselves together one evening while their father and mother were engaged in conversation. The children paid no attention to what passed, till Philip (who was very lively and inquisitive)

happened to hear his father say of some person he was speaking of, that he might be truly called, *a wise man!* These last words, which were uttered emphatically, struck his attention.

“A wise man!” said he to his brother and sisters: “who is that, I wonder, that papa can be talking about?”—“Nobody that we know, you may be sure,” replied Kate.—“No, but papa knows him, and I should like to know him very much,” said Philip; and he began to conjecture what kind of a person this wise man must be. He thought of the seven wise men of Greece; but he did not imagine there were any of that sort in England. As soon as there was a pause in the conversation, he asked his papa what this wise man’s name was, and where he lived. “He lives,” replied his father, “not very far off; and his name is Johnson.”

“Johnson! O, some relation to Dr. Johnson, no doubt,” said Frederic.—“That is more than I know,” answered his father; “but if you are so curious to see a wise man, I will promise to take you all to call upon him to-morrow morning.”

Philip and the rest thanked their papa for this promise; and very much pleased were they at the thought of it.

The next morning the children talked much of their expected visit; and wondered they did not hear their father give orders for the chaise.

“How many miles off is it, papa?” said Philip.

"Not half a mile," said his father.

PHILIP. Not half a mile! Well now, I had no idea that there was, what one could call *a wise man* living any where hereabouts.

FREDERIC. No more had I.

JULIA. I think I know where he lives;—don't you remember that old fashioned looking house, just off the common, with tall narrow windows, and a high wall all around it, where they say a very old gentleman lives all alone?—that is the place I dare say.

PHILIP. I wonder whether he wears a long beard!

KATE. No, no; most likely nothing but a huge wig.

JULIA. A wig! no such thing! depend upon it he has his own white locks, waving about his temples.

PHILIP. We shall find him up to his elbows in old dusty books, I'll engage.

FREDERIC. Or perhaps with globes and glasses, and all sorts of apparatus.

PHILIP. He will not be very well pleased, I am afraid, to be interrupted in his studies by us.

JULIA. For my part, I shall take care not to speak one word while we are in the room.

KATE. And so shall I.

PHILIP. I hope he will not ask us any questions!

FREDERIC. O, as to that, you may depend upon it he will not notice one of us; perhaps not so much as know we are there.

KATE. I am afraid I shall laugh.

PHILIP. Laugh! if you do though, we shall get turned out, every one of us, depend upon it.

On these remarks their papa made no comment: he only smiled occasionally; and at length bade them make ready to accompany him on his visit to the wise man. When they set off, Julia was much surprised that he passed the turning leading to the common, and kept straight on towards the town. "Now I have no idea who in the world it can be," said she. When they entered the town, they looked at most of the principal houses as they passed, expecting to stop every instant. "*Doctor Somebody*;" said Philip, endeavouring to read the name on a brass plate—"this is it, I dare say." But no; his father passed on, and soon turned down a narrow street, where the dwellings were of a humbler description; and knocked at the door of a mean looking house. A plain, middle-aged man opened it, and courteously invited them to enter. "Papa has to call here first, for something," whispered the children to each other. He ushered them into a small parlour, where his wife was sitting at needle-work; while three girls, her daughters, were seated on a form before her, reading their lessons. The room was in perfect order; and the mother and her children were neatly dressed. The only decorations of the apartment were two or three maps; and a few portraits of some of the old divines, and other pious ministers, on the wall.



The young folks listened to the conversation which their father entered into with these persons; and they quickly perceived (for these children were well taught, and could discriminate) that they conversed sensibly; and that their father, although much their superior in education, regarded them with respect. After a few minutes thus spent, their papa told the master of the house that he would not detain him any longer from his employment; but that he had taken the liberty of bringing his children with him, in the hope that he would allow them to look on for a little time, while he was at work: it would be, he said, both amusing and instructive to them, as they had never had an opportunity of seeing that operation before. To this request he most obligingly acceded; and, with a look of great good nature at the young folks, immediately conducted them to the uppermost room in the house, in which he carried on his business. It was a light, airy apartment; and there was a pleasant view of the adjacent country from its long low window. The children were much interested in watching the process, and in listening to the intelligent explanation he gave them of his trade; for he was a very ingenious mechanic; and he told them many things which they had never heard before.

When their curiosity was a little satisfied, they began to look around the room, where their attention was attracted to a few shelves, containing his

small library. Upon examining the titles of the books, they found that several of them treated of subjects more or less connected with his own line of business. There were, however, a few of a more general nature, and such as the children were surprised to see in the possession of so plain a man. But the greater part of the collection were well-chosen books of divinity; with a Bible, which had the appearance of being well read. They now again listened to the stranger's discourse with their father; and were struck with the mild and pleasing expression of his countenance, when he was telling him how happily his hours passed in that solitary chamber.

"I often think, Sir," said he, "that I cannot be sufficiently thankful that my calling is of a nature that allows me so much retirement and opportunity for thinking: so that while I am labouring for the meat that perishes, I am also able to seek after that which will endure to everlasting life. Indeed, Sir," continued he, "I am a happy man. The cheerful hope of another life is surely enough to make a man unspeakably happy. In addition to this, God is pleased to give me many comforts to render this life pleasant to me. I have a wife like-minded with myself; and when my working hours are over, I want no other recreation than that of going down to her and our dear children, whom it is our delight to train up, as far as we are able, to wisdom and virtue. I have great pleasure in reading to her and to them

such books as we possess; and thus we increase our little stock of knowledge, as opportunity allows. But, Sir, though I mention these things, my happiness, I trust, does not depend upon them; but is fixed upon that good hope which sweetens every comfort, and softens every trial."

The father and his children were pleased with their visit; which, for some time after they took leave, formed the subject of their conversation; until Philip, suddenly perceiving that they were on their return home, exclaimed, "But are not we going to see the wise man?"—"My dear," said his father, "we have but just left him."—"What, was *that* the wise man?" said all the children at once.

FATHER. That was the person of whom you heard me say last night, that he was a truly wise man.

PHILIP. But, papa—I thought—

FATHER. Well, what did you think?

PHILIP. Why although he appears very good, and happy, and industrious, and all that, yet he certainly is not at all the kind of person we expected to see.

FREDERIC. No, not at all.

FATHER. I cannot help that: and I still think that what I said of him was perfectly correct. What kind of a person did you expect to see?

PHILIP. Why, papa, we thought he would at least be a scholar, you know, with his head stuffed full of

Latin and Greek ; or a philosopher, or an author, or something of that sort.

FATHER. You mean, that you expected to see a learned man, or a clever man : but that was your own fault : I promised you no such thing. Are you not aware, children, that a man may be learned, or clever, or both, without being *wise* ; and that a man may be *wise* who is neither the one nor the other ?

FREDERIC. Yes, wise in some things.

FATHER. Wise in every thing with which *he* has to do.—Can you recollect, Frederic, that definition of wisdom we met with the other day ?

FREDERIC. Something of this sort, was it not ?—that “ *wisdom consists in employing the best means for the attainment of the most important end.*”

FATHER. Very well. Then I think we have unquestionably seen a wise man this morning. You heard from himself the grand object of this good man’s pursuit : and this must by every one be allowed to be the most important of all objects. He aims at nothing less than eternal life ; and to this end, he appears to employ the best means ; such as God himself prescribes. And this wisdom, which is from above, teaches him to conduct himself wisely in all the relations of life. He is wise as a tradesman ;—being honest and industrious ; and exerting his ingenuity in his calling, as a talent which God has given him ; so that he is one of the most ingenious mechanics in the neighbourhood. He is wise as a

neighbour—living in peace and charity with all around him. He is wise as the master of a family ; —being contented with such things as he has ; never attempting to vie with his superiors, nor aiming to be thought what he is not. He shewed himself to be a wise man, by choosing for a partner a wise woman ; that is, a pious and prudent woman ; and he conducts himself wisely as a husband and a father—guiding his house with discretion, and training his children to tread in his own steps. He eminently displays also one of the invariable characteristics of true wisdom, by his modest and unassuming deportment. But above all, and as the cause of all, this man is *wise*, in making it his chief concern to be a Christian : not merely by profession, but in earnest. His religion, you see, is of the true sort. It not only gives him a hope of being happy hereafter, but it makes him happy *now*. It shines in his face, and reigns in his dwelling. In that solitary room, where many would think it a punishment to pass an hour, he enjoys, daily, the high honour and happiness of holding communion with his Maker ; while the noisy world below are disquieting themselves in vain, with every passing vanity. And in his daily walk and conversation, he has this testimony, that he pleases God.

Now, children, have I not performed my promise ? —tell me, if you have not seen, according to the strictest sense of the word, A WISE MAN ?

## XXVI.

### THE CLEVER FOOL.

NOT very long after the father and his children had paid their visit to the wise man, the effects of a gentleman lately deceased in that neighbourhood, were advertised for sale by auction. As it was well known that his house contained many curiosities, persons from miles round, flocked to attend the sale: and, amongst the rest, this gentleman and his children; for he was so good a father that he suffered no opportunity to escape that might afford instruction or rational amusement to his family.

“Children,” said he to them, as they were driving to the place—“you remember that some time ago I took you to see a wise man: you were surprised by that visit; perhaps you will be still more so when I tell you, that we are going this morning to the late residence of a man, who, according to all that appeared of his character, might with equal propriety have been called *a clever fool*.”

PHILIP. A clever fool!

JULIA. It seems a contradiction.

FREDERIC. Papa will explain it, I dare say.

KATE. A clever fool!—how droll!

FATHER. As this poor gentleman was a stranger to you, and as our opinions can now do him neither good nor harm, I do not scruple, with a view of its being useful to ourselves, to relate to you what appeared unfavourable in his character. But let us, at the same time, indulge a charitable hope, that we may, after all, be mistaken in our judgment. Indeed, I could wish, as much as possible, to keep him, as an individual, out of sight. I only mean to explain to you, that a person living and acting, as it is commonly reported he did, can claim no higher appellation than that of a *clever fool*.

CHILDREN. Well papa, now tell us how it was.

FATHER. Nay, stay till we arrive at his house, and have looked about us, and then you shall judge for yourselves.

Upon their arrival at the destined spot, they were charmed with the beauty of the situation, and the pleasant aspect of the residence. The house and grounds were rather compact and elegant, than extensive or magnificent: but there was a symmetry and beauty of design which at once pleased the eye, and conveyed an idea of the good taste of the possessor. And as the general view was striking, the detail, when examined, excited still greater admiration. Our party, at first, amused themselves with walking through the park and gardens, which exhibited, at every turn, some ingenious contrivance for

pleasure or utility. The gardens displayed a variety of the most beautiful flowers, in the greatest perfection. The green houses were, of themselves, thought worth going many miles to see, they contained so rare a collection of exotics, and other curious plants, disposed in the most exact order; while fruits in and out of season, yielded their tempting fragrance in rich profusion. Stately swans adorned the river that wound through the park; while shady alcoves, rosy bowers, classic temples, baths and fountains, at every turn surprised the admiring visitor. The recesses of a shady grove, conducted to a cool and beautiful grotto, which was enriched with some of the most rare and curious specimens in mineralogy. Lastly, they visited a small botanical garden, which afforded them much instruction as well as amusement; for the late possessor was a man of science, and took particular pains with this well arranged collection.

The children were delighted; and not less surprised when they were assured that of these various embellishments and contrivances he was himself the designer and inventor; and that it was his own taste and ingenuity that was displayed in every part.

Upon entering the mansion, the effect was not less striking. The apartments were disposed and furnished with great taste and elegance; and continually exhibited some novel invention for promoting ease or pleasure, or for avoiding inconvenience.



But, what was the most interesting, were the valuable collections in the various departments of art and science with which this house was embellished. A capital collection of old pictures, by the best masters, occupied the long gallery. The library was extensive, and contained a well arranged assemblage of the works of the most celebrated authors of every age, and in every language.

They were next shewn a cabinet, containing a valuable assortment of ancient coins and medals: after which they visited the laboratory: for it appeared that the deceased possessed a thorough knowledge of chemistry; and had himself made some ingenious discoveries in that interesting science. Another room was devoted to mechanism; and exhibited models of many of the most useful and ingenious machines of modern invention, some of them displaying improvements of his own. Last of all, ascending to the highest story, they reached the observatory, which was furnished with its appropriate apparatus, and contained the largest telescope these children had ever seen. The gentleman, it was said, frequently passed whole nights in this place; astronomy was his favourite study.—For all these things were not collected by him (as is frequently the case in the houses of the rich) as mere appendages to wealth. The curiosities of science, art, and literature, are commonly enough to be seen in the possession of persons of trifling and vulgar

minds, wholly incapable of deriving any other gratification from them than as articles of show, and who value them merely as they do the other expensive ornaments of their dwellings. But, in this instance, they were possessed by a man of taste and science; who derived genuine pleasure from the pursuits in which he was engaged; and who was therefore, so far, happy, useful, and respectable. When the party descended to the lower part of the house, they found it filled with company, and the great hall exhibited a scene of noise, bustle, and confusion. The auctioneer was, at that moment, expatiating on the value of an article before him, which some were cautiously examining; others were marking their catalogues; each was intent on his own interests, and nothing was less thought of than he to whom all had so lately belonged.

“Let us leave this noisy place, Papa,” said Julia—“it makes me melancholy.”—They soon made their way through the crowd; and leaving the mansion, their father led them through a fine plantation to the outskirts of the park, where they soon discovered a little ivy-clad steeple, embowered in dark chesnut trees, surrounded by a few lowly graves, and adorned with one or two stately monuments. “Here,” said the father, pointing to one of these—“lie the remains of this accomplished person.”

“Now then, papa,” said Philip—“pray tell us,

though I partly guess, why you called such a clever man—a fool.” “Because,” replied his father—“of his whole existence, which he knew would be endless, he apparently provided for no more than the exceedingly small proportion of sixty-eight years. It is true that to make these sixty-eight years pass pleasantly, he spared no pains; and we will allow, that he so far succeeded, as to enjoy, during that time, more rational pleasure than most men who live only for this world. But, granting this, is it not still the lowest degree of folly for a man to devote all the energies of his mind to securing the comfort and entertainment of so short a period, and to make no provision for an eternal existence?—There he lies! all that he ever appeared to care for he has lost for ever. Those curious collections which he made with so much pains and cost—all those fruits of his patient and laborious studies, which we have been admiring, will, in a few hours, be disposed of and dispersed; the cheerful mansion will be empty and deserted: other inhabitants will occupy it; in a few years his name will be no more remembered! so that the only thing that was of any real consequence to him, is that which, it is greatly to be feared, he totally neglected.

“But the extremity of his folly was this:—that this change which he has undergone, this loss of all that he valued, was what he was well aware must, somewhere about this time, befall him. He knew, as

well as all other men, that he must die. He knew, too, that the great Creator, whose works he spent his life in investigating and admiring, had, by an express revelation, informed him, in common with others, of the only way of securing everlasting life and happiness. Of these things he could not be ignorant: nor did I ever understand that he professed to doubt them: yet, strange to say, that divine volume stood unopened on his shelves. It is said this unhappy man rarely read the Bible!—That he, who could spend whole nights in gazing on the heavens, bent not his knee to the Former of them all. That while so plenteously partaking the bounties of His providence, he never (unless with the utmost formality) acknowledged his obligation; or appeared to feel his dependence. Even of late, when he knew he must be drawing towards the close of life, he appeared to engage, with as much avidity as ever, in his favourite pursuits: though he loved conversation, and delighted to discourse on other subjects, yet he was never known to talk about the life to come, upon which he was so soon to enter. Thus he deliberately chose to enjoy these few poor years, and to neglect his concerns for immortality. Now, if this clever man had purposely set fire to his beautiful house, and had calmly seen all his valuable collections consumed by the flames, every body would have exclaimed—"what a fool!"—As it was, he was extolled and applauded by most men,

although guilty of incomparably greater madness than this.

“Children, endeavour to conceive (though it is impossible you should fully comprehend it) the tremendous folly of neglecting a book which God has sent us to read! It is only because it is so very common for men to disregard their Bibles, that we are not more struck with the strange absurdity of it. This gentleman was particularly admired for the universality of his talents: and, it was always spoken to his praise, that, while so much engaged in scientific pursuits, he attended equally to the elegancies and refinements of life; he was as cheerful a companion, and as finished a gentleman, as he was a sound philosopher. But, alas! how very far, it is to be feared, he was from being *universally* sagacious!—how very partial and limited even was his cleverness! He not only knew that in a few years he must die, but, in some ways, he deliberately prepared for the event. He made his will: he gave particular directions as to what should take place after his decease; he even caused this vault to be built, left directions for his funeral, and wrote an inscription for his monument. So that, you see, he left nothing undone but that one thing, which, alone, was of real consequence to him. This poor clever fool had no forethought, made no provision for his soul!

“I have been told, that the last thing that occu-

pied his attention was an improved method of raising pine-apples. By a great deal of thought and ingenuity, he succeeded in raising them some weeks earlier, and of a finer sort than any that were grown in the neighbourhood. Yes, children—here was a man of nearly seventy, really interested about *pine-apples*, while the great business of his eternal welfare was still unattended to! A party of friends was invited to dine with him, in order to partake of this rich dessert; but, on the eve of this intended entertainment, it was said to him,—“This night thy soul shall be required of thee.” He was found the next morning dead in his bed; and now, whose are those things that he possessed?

JULIA. Oh, papa!

FATHER. Now, children, let us leave this melancholy spot; remembering that whether or not our fears of this individual are well founded, we are but too well assured that the world abounds with men and women, who, if not as clever, are quite as foolish as we have supposed him to have been. Let it be *our* chief concern that we may not be of the number. But never, never, till that day, when this sepulchre shall be torn open by the voice of the archangel, will any human mind be fully able to comprehend the dreadful difference between a *plain wise man*, and a *clever fool*.”

## XXVII.

### REVELATION<sup>4</sup> XIV. 13.

*"I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."*

BUT is it not a dismal thing to die?—to leave this busy and beautiful world—to close the eyes for ever on all the engaging objects that surround us—to forsake the pleasing and interesting pursuits of life—to have done for ever with its pleasures, to break off from every favourite scheme, and all our agreeable recreations—can all this be otherwise than painful? And still more so is the thought of leaving the endeared circle of our friends; to see those faces no more that are so familiar and so much beloved; no more to make one of the domestic band of which we have long formed an animated part; for our voice to be heard no more in the lively discourse; our smile never again to enliven the social intercourse! and even this is not all: to die is not merely to be absent (as we may frequently have been) at a distant place, from whence we could still hold some intercourse with those we love: but it is to go for ever whence we cannot either return

to, or maintain any connexion with, them. Besides, whither is it to go? Is it not to the cold grave? This body which has been nourished and cherished with so much care and tenderness, to which so much cost and pains have been devoted to make it comfortable and agreeable; which has been, perhaps, tenderly screened from every blast—this body must lie and perish in the comfortless tomb! This it is to die:—thus death is naturally regarded by us:—no wonder then that it is an event so universally dreaded and so carefully avoided. All ages naturally shrink from death, from the youngest child that is capable of any reflection, to the old man who has arrived at the utmost verge of life. All ranks fear it: the poor, who have so little to attach them to life; as well as the rich, whose treasure lies in this world; the servant and the slave, as much almost as their master,—the savage as well as the civilized. This then is the cry from earth.

Now let us hear the voice from heaven: “Blessed are the dead:”—What a strange difference is this! In what an opposite light do these parties view the same circumstance! Let us inquire which of them is best qualified to judge of it; and whether this view of the subject is likely to be correct.

Observe then, that *this* voice was not that of some pious minister, by whom we may frequently have heard the blessedness of the saints in heaven asserted; nor was it the voice of mourning relatives,



consoling themselves with this consideration for the loss of some dear friend. Nor was it the voice of the Scriptures only, although by them we now hear this truth declared. Nor was it the voice of some lost soul; who from the regions of misery and despair, might lift up his eyes and behold afar off the blessed society of heaven. These voices indeed, would be impressive, and we might justly give credit to any of them. But this voice came with still greater authority than any of these:—it came from *Heaven*. Perhaps it was not even the voice of an angel; but might be spoken by one of those very blessed ones who had died in the Lord. However this might be, it proceeded from some one of the inhabitants of the place where the spirits of the just abide; and who was therefore well qualified to judge of the state in which they exist. While this voice spoke, the light and glory of heaven itself shone upon the speaker. How impossible would it have been to impress that heavenly orator with an idea that there was any thing gloomy or lamentable in the death of good men, while on the one hand he looked down upon this dark and sorrowful world, whence they came out of great tribulation; and while on the other he beheld the glories of Paradise, and stood in full view of those heavenly mansions which the Lord has prepared for his saints. Amid that “innumerable company of angels and of the spirits of just men made perfect”—partaking of that fulness of joy, of

those rivers of pleasures, which flow through the celestial regions, how must he pity the darkness and unbelief of those who "start and shrink and fear to launch away," into life and happiness.

Thus then, when we consider from whence the voice proceeded, we must needs give the fullest credit to its testimony. If a friend who had emigrated to a foreign country, for which we intended shortly to sail, were to write a very favourable account of it, and to assure us of its pleasantness and fertility, we should not only credit the description, but with increased impatience hasten our departure, and rejoice in the prospect of arriving there. Why then should not this faithful assurance from one who inhabits that heavenly country produce the same effect? Let us *believe* that it is, indeed, a blessed thing to die; that death will not only deliver us from the pains and sufferings of the present life, but that all the accumulated pleasures and advantages of this world are not to be compared with the glory that shall follow.

Let not young persons think this subject inapplicable to them. For, not to mention the uncertainty of life at every age, it is of the highest importance to be early impressed with just ideas of death and futurity: that it may become a subject of familiar and agreeable reflection, rather than of dread and terror. It is common to sigh and say, "we must die:" but this is not the proper language and feel-

ing respecting that great change. And if we were early accustomed to dwell upon those descriptions of the heavenly world, and those assurances of the blessedness of the saints in light with which the Scriptures abound, it would become an object of actual desire. Instead of thinking of heaven as a mere refuge from hell (which it is to be feared is too commonly the case, even with those who know better) we should, like the apostle, have a *desire* to depart, and to exchange this imperfect state for that unchanging felicity.

It may be thought we have forgotten one important part of our text, from which it might appear that this comfortable information is addressed only to such as are there described.—But no: although it is true, that of all the dead, they only are blessed “who die in the Lord,” yet this assurance is made to *all* the living, to allure them to come to the Lord, that they also may partake of this blessedness.—Observe, the voice which the apostle heard from heaven, said unto him, “*Write* ;” and surely it was to be written in order that all might read, and be profited, and stimulated by this most interesting intelligence. Those therefore who have reason to fear that they have never yet given themselves to God, instead of passing over such passages as these, as though they had no concern in them, should, on the contrary, read and study them as that which was commanded to be written for *their* special use. As

the poor prodigal was induced to arise and set off homewards, in consequence of reflecting upon the abundant provisions of his father's house; so may sinners, young and old, be allured to set their faces Zion-ward, by contemplating the blessed state of the inhabitants of that heavenly city. And O, how much encouragement have they to do so! The gladness of the news of salvation consists in this—That all this inconceivable felicity is attainable by every one who hears of it. There is no obstacle;—all are invited;—the gay, the worldly, those who are far from righteousness; if they do but “ask, shall receive; if they knock, the door of this happiness will be opened to them.” And they know who has said, “I am the door; by me if any man enter, he shall go in and out and find pasture.” It is true there is but one way to heaven: but there is no need of any other; because this one way is safe, easy, and open to every passenger. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself proclaims, without any limitation, “Verily, verily, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.” This is good news indeed! But if the contemplation of this endless happiness, if the sound of these encouraging invitations should fail to induce any to seek it, let such hear the terrors of the Lord. Let them remember that the dead who die *without* the Lord, are cursed. For, as we see in the context, “they have no rest day nor night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.”

Those who have lost some dear friend, of whom there is good reason to believe that they died in the Lord, may hear themselves addressed particularly by the voice of our text. Were they permitted, they would surely corroborate this testimony ; and say to their mourning relations—" it *is* true ;—the dead that die in the Lord are blessed indeed ! but let us not suppose that a supernatural proof of the reality of that blessedness is necessary to our firmly believing it ; nor that such an interposition would of itself, be sufficient to overcome our reluctance and indisposition to spiritual things : for " if we believe not Moses and the prophets, Jesus and his apostles, if we are not affected by the impressive declarations of the word of God, neither should we be persuaded though one were to address us from the dead."

## XXVIII.

### ONE POUND AND TEN THOUSAND.

THERE was a certain industrious little girl, in a small country town, who had learned to plait straw for bonnets : although she was but young, she did

her work very neatly, and her parents, though poor themselves, allowed her to keep all her earnings to purchase her own clothes with. Rachel enjoyed this independency; it made her work with alacrity and interest, so that she might be seen early and late at her window: her little fingers moving like clock-work. And it was thought a good sign by many people, that she was not observed to lift her head from her work whenever any body passed by, which is too often the case with girls who sit at needle work at their windows; so that, on market days especially, they must lose as many as one stitch in three. But Rachel used to think to herself, what did it signify to her, who was taking a walk; or how people were dressed, or who was going to buy a bun at the baker's shop opposite;—whereas, it did signify a great deal, whether her task was finished at the end of the day, and whether she had got her usual week's earnings on Saturday night.

There was a young neighbour of Rachel's at next door, who lost as many pence every week by that bun and biscuit shop, as if she had been in the habit of treating herself with biscuits and buns; which, though she would have liked very much, she could not afford to purchase. It was the case here, as in most other towns, that there were a great many idle people who had nothing to do in a morning, but to walk about: and who, when they were tired, would turn into the pastry-cook's, or this biscuit shop, to

refresh themselves with something good. Now this young girl had so much idle curiosity, that she could not refrain, or rather she *did not* refrain, from looking off from her work all the time that any ladies or nurse-maids were there, to observe how they were dressed, how long they stayed, and then to see whether they went up town or down town, or turned into the church-yard. The foolish girl did not consider that as a penny saved is a penny gained, so, a penny not earned is a penny lost.

But to return to Rachel: it was not long before she reaped the reward of her diligence. After having been employed about a twelvemonth at her trade, it appeared, besides having furnished herself with decent clothing during that time, thus relieving her parents of the burden of providing her dress, she had realized no less a sum than nineteen shillings and sixpence, sterling. Industrious people are generally frugal also. This was the case with Rachel. Indeed, she would never have been able to save up all this money, if she had spent half as much as most young girls do, in ribbons and bobbin-net, and beads, and other trifles, which, after all, only give them a tawdry and vulgar appearance: and she now felt very glad that she was not prevailed upon to purchase that pair of gold *drops*, which the old pedlar tempted her with so much in the spring.

"I should like for once," said Rachel to herself, "to have a real bank note of my own.\* I have only

to earn one sixpence more, and then I will get 'it changed for a one pound note." So she resolved to set to work very diligently : but as she was somewhat too eagerly shuffling the shillings and half-crowns out of her lap into her money box, her silver thimble rolled off on to the floor, and disappeared. Rachel searched for it in every corner to no purpose ; till she was at last obliged to conclude that it had found its way into a well-known mousehole under the window seat, which, by the bye, ought to have been stopped up long ago. Here Rachel first poked in her scissars, then a fork, and then a skewer ; but she found it a fathomless abyss, from which nothing came forth but tufts of cobweb. She now attempted to work without a thimble, but soon found she should lose time by that : then she borrowed her mother's, winding a piece of paper round her finger to make it fit : but in spite of this, it slipped off continually ; besides, her mother wanted it. So she was obliged to go out, much against her will, and buy a new one, which cost her eighteen-pence ; and thus she had to wait some time longer before she could make up the desired sum.

It was not till old Michaelmas-day (and Rachel thought it was very particular that it should happen just on that day) that she realized her wishes, and placed a bank of England one-pound note at the bottom of her money-box. This treasure she surveyed with considerable satisfaction, and soon began



to calculate how many useful things she might purchase with all that money. At first, indeed, she thought of several things that were *not* useful ; but after a little reflection, she resolved not to think of them any more ; but determined that her principal purchase should be a warm cloak, to go to the Sunday school in, this next winter ; which she was in the habit of regularly attending through all weathers. This decision, which she knew to be wise and prudent, because she could have pleased her fancy much more by other things, made her feel that pleasantest of all sensations, self approval ; and as she took up her work again she began to sing. The lines she happened to think of were very suitable—

“ Whene’er I take my walks abroad,” &c.

But when she came to that part—

“ Not more than others I deserve,  
Yet God has given me more”—

she chanced to cast her eyes on her bank note ; when the large word “ ONE,” caught her attention. “ It is but *one* pound after all,” thought she, and she stopped singing. “ Ah, if I am so happy because I have one, what should I be if I had hundreds or thousands, like some people ! Let me see ; if I had ten thousand pounds, for instance, I should be just

ten thousand times happier than I am now." And now it appeared to Rachel, that to be ten thousand times less happy than it was possible to be, was scarcely to be happy at all; this thought made her feel a little discontented.

Some days afterwards she was sitting at her work as usual. The little parlour which her mother allowed her to occupy, was neat and pleasant. A bright yellow canary bird, which sang sweetly, together with a fine box of mignonette, and some pots of beautiful balsams, ornamented the window where she worked; and she thought it very pleasant to sit there on a fine day, like this, with these pretty flowers before her, and her canary singing his lively tunes. Just as she was thinking so, some ladies came in to look at the different kinds of straw that she used to plait. Rachel displayed specimens of all the various sorts; but the young lady who wished to choose some was very difficult to please. She seemed dissatisfied with them all; and complained of "the impossibility of getting any thing in the world in the country." Rachel could not help thinking that this fine lady looked cross and discontented: she also thought that she must be selfish and inconsiderate; for she hindered her from her work the best part of half an hour, looking first at one pattern, and then at another—now seeming inclined to order some—then hesitating again, and at last going away without either choosing any, or

making the least apology for giving her so much trouble.

When the ladies were gone, Rachel's mother came in to inquire whether they had bespoke any straw. Rachel told her, and added, "Mother, do you know I was thinking that I had rather sit here all my life, plaiting of straw, than be that lady that had on the purple velvet pelisse; for I am sure she cannot be happy." "Child," replied her mother, "you don't know what you are talking about! that young lady has got ten thousand pounds to her fortune."

"Ten thousand pounds!" exclaimed Rachel: she said no more, but the words struck her. They brought forcibly to her mind what she had lately been thinking about her one pound note; and she wondered how it could be, that instead of being ten thousand times happier, the lady did not appear to be nearly so happy as she herself was. In the midst of these thoughts, she was interrupted by the entrance of a young lady whom Rachel was always glad to see. It was her teacher at the Sunday school, who often called in to converse with her most intelligent scholars; and she was so good and affable, and seemed to take such a kind interest in her affairs, that Rachel was encouraged to communicate to her all the little troubles or pleasures that at any time occupied her mind. It was not long, therefore, before she made her acquainted with the subject of her present thoughts: she told her, in fact, the

history of her pound note; and requested to know, whether it was really true, that that discontented looking lady had ten thousand times as many pound notes as she had? "Yes, Rachel," replied the teacher, "she has indeed quite as many as that; but I suspect that this lady and you have fallen into the same mistake about pound notes, by imagining that persons are happy in proportion to the number of them they happen to possess. You, accordingly, were rather discontented because you had only one; and she, it is said, is *very* discontented because she has only ten thousand.

RACHEL. *Only* ten thousand! why, is not that enough?

TEACHER. She expected that the relation who bequeathed her this money in his will, would have left her three times as much; and supposed, that if he had, she should have been three times as happy: so that when he died, and she found it was *only ten thousand*, she went into hysterics; and never seems to have recovered the disappointment!

RACHEL. Dear me! but sure ten thousand pounds must be enough to buy every thing that she can want?

TEACHER. Very true indeed, Rachel; and now you have yourself answered the question that puzzled you so much. The use of money is to supply our real wants, according to our station; and it is only in this way that money can affect happiness.

Those who have enough for this purpose are rich, however small, comparatively, their means may be. You felt pleased and happy as long as you viewed your savings in this just light. You thought of something you really wanted, and found that you could now purchase it; it was not till you began to think of some things that you did not want—hundreds and thousands of pounds, for instance, that you felt any discontent. I believe, Rachel, that you have every day as much wholesome food as you wish for?

RACHEL. O yes, ma'am, always.

TEACHER. And you appear to have warm, neat, and suitable clothes, I think?

RACHEL. Why, yes, middling well for that, thank ye, ma'am.

TEACHER. You have also a comfortable house, a good bed, and a pleasant room, here, to sit and work in.

RACHEL. Certainly, ma'am.


TEACHER. You have even some luxuries, Rachel; your pretty balsams here, and your little canary. There are many persons who give a great deal of money for baubles, which, after all, do not afford them one half the pleasure that these sweet flowers yield to you. Now, tell me, if you can, what you really want more than you have!—(*Rachel pauses.*)

TEACHER.—Come now, do tell me?

RACHEL. I don't know what to mention, particu-

lar. Sometimes I see things in the shops that I think I should like very much.

TEACHER. But if those are things that would not be suitable to your station, which I rather think is generally the case, they would not make you any happier, but quite the contrary; for they would only render you ridiculous. Don't you think so?

RACHEL. Unless I was a lady. 

TEACHER. Well, but you are *not* a lady; but an industrious little girl; who is so happy as to have learned an honest trade, and so successful as to be furnished with constant employment: be assured, then, that there are few ladies more happily circumstanced than you are: and if you have sense and wisdom enough to believe this, and to be content with such things as you have, you are better off with this one pound note in your box, than most people are who can count their ten thousand.

Rachel felt satisfied by this explanation; and she set off soon after, in good spirits, with her teacher; who was so kind as to offer to assist her, in choosing the cloth for her new cloak.

## XXIX.

### THE HOPEFUL ONE.

A GOOD minister having occasion to call upon a gentleman in a neighbouring town, was introduced to his family circle; which consisted of several young people of various ages, from ten or twelve to eighteen and twenty. The bloom and sprightliness of youth graced their countenances; and as the stranger's eye glanced round the lively party, a glow of benevolence warmed his heart. During his visit he had an opportunity to make some observation on the manners and engagements of these young persons.

One of the elder ladies amused him, for a time, by playing, which she did with much taste and skill: she was considered, indeed, to excel; and it was evident she had devoted much time and pains to this pleasing accomplishment. Two younger sisters were occupied in working muslin, on which they appeared intently engaged: of the excellence of the work their visitor was no great judge; but he observed that their dexterous fingers were rapidly producing a very rich and elegant effect: he remarked, too, the

interest they appeared to take in their employment. The eldest son, a fine youth of eighteen, talked a great deal: sometimes rattling with his sisters; sometimes giving his opinion on what was passing with an energy and decision that occasionally tempted the stranger to smile. Any question on which his father hesitated, he would settle instantaneously, with a rapidity and positiveness which left no room for further discussion. There appeared, however, an agreeable openness in his temper; but it was a pity that he disguised and disfigured his naturally agreeable manner by a certain *dash* and *spirit*; and by the frequent use of *cant phrases*, which, though easily acquired by every blockhead who hears them, are yet sometimes employed by young men of sense who are weak enough to adopt them; with a view, it should seem, to shew that they are men of the world. He seemed especially anxious to impress every one with this idea just now; and to form a contrast between his own dashing air and the plain dress and simple manners of their guest. Once he cut short a more important topic by abruptly inquiring of their visitor if he played chess; declaring that it was "an excellent game;—wondering he had never given his attention to it—for that, positively, it was an excellent game." Then again, holding out his cup of tea, with an air, to the servant, he sent it back to his sister, declaring that "it was not tea, and that he could not take it." And yet (though nobody



would have guessed it just then) this youth was not destitute of sense and intelligence. He had not, however, sagacity enough to discover, that beneath the plain appearance of the stranger, there was concealed a keen discernment of character; and the real knowledge of men and things, instead of the mere affectation of it. Still less did he suspect, that his own silly, artificial manner was at that time the subject of his smiling observation.

But there was one of the party who, while he did and said nothing to attract it, yet excited the minister's attention more than any of the rest. This was a lad of about fifteen: he was rather less blooming than the other young folks; but his look was not less cheerful, while it was more interesting than any of theirs. He spoke less than the others, and with more modesty; and what he did say was more to the purpose. He appeared to listen attentively to the minister's conversation.

"You have an interesting family, Sir," said he to the father, when they were for a moment left alone; "I hope they are great comforts to you." "Sir," replied he, "my children are, I believe, much like other young people: I have no particular occasion to complain of them. But, Sir, I *have* great comfort in *one* of my children: did you see that boy, Edward?"—the tears came into the father's eyes as he spoke.—"That boy has appeared to fear God from his childhood; he has long been in the habit of

private prayer; he loves serious conversation when we are alone: and his general temper and conduct shew that his piety is genuine. Yes, thank God, I have *one* hopeful child.

The conversation which was here interrupted, left a painful impression on the mind of the good minister. The gaiety of the young people, which at first amused him, now gave him uneasiness. The words "*one* hopeful child," dwelt upon his mind. "What! only *one*," thought he, "of this interesting group that fears God! only *one* that is concerned about salvation, and that is prepared to die!"

While these thoughts were passing in his mind, the youthful party continued laughing, and talking, and joking: they were eager and animated in all they said and did; and frequently spoke of things that were of no importance—the most contemptible trifles, with a degree of earnestness, which they would have pronounced to be canting, hypocritical, or, at least, quite overdone, if the subject had been any thing connected with their immortal destiny.

Poor young people!—But we must now leave them and the good minister, who is probably thinking of some way, that would be deemed least offensive, of introducing useful conversation. Reader, we have invited you to this domestic party, only with a view to your own improvement. Do you wonder where the family lives, and what is their name? Rather look around amongst the families of

your friends and neighbours; but especially look into your *own*, and see if the description will not suit many that you know. Alas! this is no singular instance.—Observe the trains of young people who fill the pews of our places of worship: behold the gay attire, the wandering eye, the irreverent deportment:—listen to their discourse as they issue from the place: or follow them home; enter one dwelling after another: hear the remarks that are made upon the dress, and other unimportant concerns of those they have seen: listen to their *criticisms* upon what they have heard: and mark their prevailing levity; scarcely checked by the restraining eye of anxious and disappointed parents; who, sabbath after sabbath, watch in vain to see if the good seed has taken root in the hearts of any of them. Remark the eagerness that is evinced about the showy accomplishments and vanities of life. Observe all this, and say, if there was any thing rare or singular in the description of this family? Alas! in some cases, would not the singularity of such an account consist in this, that there *was* one hopeful child in the family! How many, even of pious parents, have not this consolation;—not *one* hopeful child!

What a melancholy, what a strange state of things was implied in the account the father of this family gave of his children, when he said, that they were “much like the generality of young people!” In other words, that the generality of young people are

thoughtless about ETERNITY—unconcerned 'for the salvation of their souls !

Reader, you are a member of some family : you have brothers and sisters. It may be that some of them are seriously disposed, while others are thoughtless and indifferent. To which party do *you* belong ? Are you one of the *many*, or one of the *few* ? Does a peaceful conscience allow you humbly to answer, that you hope you may be numbered with the latter, that you have chosen the narrow way ; that you have joined the small, the happy company that are walking therein ?—Go on then, rejoicing ;—but take heed lest you fall. At present you are ignorant of Satan's devices ; you have not yet discovered half the deceitfulness of sin ; and it is only by prayer, and watchfulness, and deep humility, that you can hope to avoid these snares. Especially guard against a spirit of pride, and a feeling of superiority towards those of your companions who are not walking with you. There is much danger here to persons who are seriously disposed. But remember it is only by a spirit directly opposite to this—by humbleness of mind and of behaviour, by gentleness, by affection, and by an *unpretending* deportment, that you can satisfy either yourself or others of the reality of your profession, or engage any to come over to your company.

But reader, is it far otherwise with you ? Are you

among the thoughtless ones? are you still in the broad road? still endeavouring to stifle the voice of conscience, and to put away the thought of death? Are you at least resolving to enjoy the world exclusively during the years of youth? Then, be assured, that whatever agreeable qualities you may possess, or whatever specious arguments you may use to satisfy your mind, you are an unhappy, a pitiable individual. You are a being upon whom wise and good men look with anxiety and sorrow; upon whom angels must look with surprise and pity; upon whom God looks with displeasure: upon whom none but devils can look with complacency. It may be, indeed, that you are possessed of so many agreeable accomplishments, and have manners and tempers so pleasing, that you may congratulate yourself upon the admiration and regard of those around you. But consider, how much of their approbation depends upon their seeing only what is *external*. Look within—search the inmost recesses of your heart; behold in that chamber of imagery the vanity, the love of admiration, the evil thoughts, the high thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God—and ask if you are authorized to feel *self* complacency, or if you deserve the esteem of which you boast.

In order to form some excuse for your neglect of religion, are you fond of detecting errors and incon-

sistencies in the lives of those who profess it? are you more gratified, or at least more amused, to discover faults in good men, than you are grieved or shocked at the crimes of bad men? What does this prove, but that you are an enemy to God? Consider that, for a moment. Whatever mistakes you may imagine religious people often make, however you may suppose they sometimes deceive themselves, be assured you are making the worst and the most absurd mistake that it is possible for a rational being to fall into; even that of neglecting *the only important thing*: and you are deceiving yourself more grossly than they can possibly do, by imagining that you are wise when you are foolish, happy when you are miserable.

Now what an unspeakable happiness it would be, if this moment's recollection should lead you to some such reflections as these.—“ Yes, I am one of the thoughtless ones of this family; I have hitherto neglected religion; I even dislike it: I endeavour to be happy without it; yet this cannot be even here, and what would it be hereafter? Unless my heart is changed I must perish; and I may never be more willing than I now am: besides, I may not have opportunity in future. What then hinders me, even *me* from being a Christian?—There are difficulties; but how many have overcome them! Why should not *I*? will not God open if I knock? shall not *I* also receive if I ask? especially if I ask for what

he commands me to pray for, and what he has promised to bestow.—I will arise, and go to my Father.”

But some who have read this question may feel at a loss how to answer it. They know, indeed, that they are not yet what they ought to be; yet they have some desires, and have made some efforts. At least, they are sure that they do not scoff at religion, or at religious people: on the contrary, they respect them and wish to be like them; they read; sometimes they pray; and they tremble at the thought of not becoming one day, decidedly religious: but at present, they are continually yielding to temptation, and cannot yet tear themselves from the love of the world. This is the state of many young persons: reader, is it yours? What then can be said to you? So many of those who have, at last, cast off all fear of God, and who are now, it is to be feared, beyond the reach of mercy, have in early life felt just the same, and *intended* as well as you, that we dare not encourage you with hopes of present safety. But why remain in this uncomfortable and dangerous state? That it is comfortless you feel: you know that you are no better prepared to die than your more thoughtless companions. Why then, will you not at once exchange this dreary bondage for happy liberty—these gloomy fears for joyful hopes—this constant uneasiness for perfect peace? Your faint, inconstant prayers are a burden and a task; but

pray fervently and regularly, and they will become a delightful employment.—Delay no longer: you will gain nothing by waiting, but increased difficulty and greater danger. Resolve, then, to be the *hopeful one*: and to gladden the hearts of your parents and Christian friends by a prompt decision: lest, like so many, you go on hesitating till you become finally hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

## XXX.

## THE LITTLE BIOGRAPHERS.

IT was the custom at Mrs. L's school, to spend an hour every evening in hearing some interesting book, which was read aloud by the young people alternately, while the hearers were employed at their needles. Mrs. L. herself usually made one of this happy party; and her questions or remarks on what was read rendered it doubly improving and agreeable to them. Having nearly finished a book which had occupied them some time, Mrs. L. announced that the following week they were to begin an inte-



resting volume of Biography; containing, chiefly, the lives of children like themselves; or giving an account of the early life of persons who had afterwards become distinguished. After Mrs. L. had left them, a few of the elder girls assembling round the fire, began to talk about it: among other things, one of them said she wondered, if any body were to write *her* life, what sort of a thing it would make; adding, that she had a great mind to do it herself. Her companions declared it was a good thought; and several of them agreed, that as the next day was a half-holiday, they would devote it to writing their own lives.

This scheme was put in execution accordingly; but, as they most of them found it a more difficult undertaking than they had expected, it would probably never have been heard of afterwards, if Mrs. L. had not happened to enter the school room when they were thus employed; and upon learning what they were about, she requested a sight of the manuscripts. This, with some reluctance was complied with; when, having glanced at several of them, she desired to keep possession of them for a few days. Nothing more was heard of it, however, until the following Monday evening, when to their great surprise, Mrs. L. produced the promised volume of Biography, with their own manuscripts inserted here and there among the pages.

“ Now,” said she, “ my intention is, that you shall

read through this volume just as you see it; your own lives are to be read in turn with these memoirs: take your places, and we will begin." This arrangement occasioned some embarrassment among our young biographers; but they knew remonstrances would be vain. A few specimens of these manuscripts, just as they were written, will be given for the amusement of the reader, together with some extracts from the volume itself. The first life that was read in this collection was that of *Lady Jane Grey*, whose virtues and accomplishments are so justly celebrated. Her historian thus speaks of her early acquirements.

"She spoke and wrote her own language with peculiar accuracy, and the French, Italian, Latin, and Greek, were as natural to her as her own. She had also some knowledge of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic; and all this while comparatively but a child. She had a sedateness of temper, a quickness of apprehension, and a solidity of judgment, that enabled her not only to become a mistress of languages, but of sciences also; so that she thought, spoke, and reasoned on subjects of the greatest importance, in a manner that excited general surprise. With these extraordinary endowments she had so much mildness, humility, and modesty, that she assumed no pride in consequence of her acquisitions."

When this life was concluded, the children unani-

mously petitioned Mrs. L. that none of theirs might be read that evening; but she would not yield to their entreaties, and desired the reader to proceed with the subjoined manuscript, which was as follows:

“Miss M. P. was the daughter of respectable parents, and was born at W——, in Middlesex; a very pleasant town, with two churches and a bridge. When she was nine years old, she went to pay a visit to her cousins at Norwich, which she enjoyed very much, and stayed half-a-year: she went in the mail coach. At twelve years of age she came to Mrs. L’s school; at which time she was four feet nine inches high; a light complexion, eyes and hair the same. At school she has not, perhaps, made quite so much proficiency as could be wished. Her disposition——she was rather——her natural temper——as to her disposition——”

Here this narrative broke off abruptly; the writer having declared, when she had proceeded thus far, that “she could not write hers at all.”

The following evening they read the interesting life of *Frances Maria, of Rochebeaucour*; “the daughter of a poor tax-gatherer, in Switzerland; who was left an orphan at eleven years old, with a little infant brother to protect and maintain. Having nothing left her by her parents but a little cottage by the side of a wood, and some old furniture, they must have perished for want, but for the in-

dustry of Frances Maria. From the age of seven years she had been able to knit a pair of men's stockings in two days. These habits of employment were of great use to her in her poverty; she set herself to spinning, sewing, and knitting alternately; and thus provided for their necessities. A girl, at twelve years old, living alone in a poor cottage, providing entirely for herself, and taking care of an infant brother as if he had been her child, was an affecting sight. Many mothers in the neighbourhood brought their children to see, saying, 'Come and see a girl of twelve years old, who conducts herself like a woman, and passes her nights in providing for her little brother.' One day, in the midst of a severe winter, when the ground was covered with snow, a she-wolf, followed by five of her young, suddenly entered poor Maria's cottage, and sprung at her little brother: Maria could have saved her own life had she then fled; but, staying to rescue him, the savage animal sprung at her throat, and she was instantly strangled. Thus died Frances Maria, at the age of fifteen."

The manuscript life which followed this was then read.

"In a pleasant village, situated within 30 miles of the metropolis, in the year 1804, Caroline W——. It was in the year 1804, that Caroline W. in a pleasant village within 30 miles of the metropolis.—

Caroline W. was born in the year 1804, in a pleasant village within 30 miles of the metropolis. She was the eldest of five children, whose names were Mari-  
anne, Esther, Susan, and George : being the eldest, though some people thought she was indulged on that account, yet, in her opinion, there were many respects in which she was the worst off. Children are so troublesome ; and she was often obliged to take care of the youngest. She has been much happier in this respect since she came to school ; though there is a great deal to do here ; and we have to rise very early these cold mornings. What will happen to her when she leaves school and is grown up, it is impossible at present to determine."

The next life in the volume was that of *Francis De Beauchateau* ; a youth of learning and genius ; of whom it is recorded, for the encouragement of others, " that he was very slow in learning ; but that what he wanted in promptitude, he supplied by labour and constant application ; and it was thus that he became learned almost in his cradle. In addition to more laborious studies, he displayed a turn for poetry, and his compositions were such, that it was scarcely believed they could be the work of a child. He also excelled in music ; yet such was his modesty, that when in company, he would never put himself forward to converse with his elders, though well able to do so : but would rather play with chil-

dren of his own age: yet if called upon to converse, or to exercise his musical or poetical talents, every one was equally delighted and surprised."

This life was succeeded by the following composition.

"Betsy B—— she was born (if the time we must fix)  
In the year—in the year, eighteen hundred and six.  
Her father's a lawyer, if that must be told;  
And as for her mother, she's too apt to scold:  
Of daughters and sons they have plenty (no matter)  
Though but three of the former and five of the latter.  
Of Betsy, the youngest, now what shall we add?  
Whose life must be published, the good and the bad.  
She's a droll little body, that's fond of a joke;  
Whether that to her praise or her blame may be spoke.  
Sometimes she writes verses, which all can't attain;  
Which if she rehearses, some folks call her vain.  
She laughs more than many, but sure that may pass,  
She learns less than any, alas! and alas!"

Next followed a sketch of the life of *Howard* the Philanthropist, whose character is too well known to need any extract here; we therefore pass immediately to that which was placed next to it.

"Biography is a very useful study; and it is in this view that the author of the following annals wishes to introduce to the public the subject of the ensuing lines. M. A. C. left the paternal roof at

the early age of three years old, to live with her aunt in Berkshire. After that—nothing particular occurred after that, till she came to reside at Mrs. L——’s school, where she has been two years and a half; and nothing very particular having happened here, she has nothing to add of material consequence. *Finis.*”

The following evening they read the life of *Thomas Garratt*, who died at the age of thirteen. Accounting for his remarkable attainments, the biographer thus speaks: “By the force of his own genius, by the exclusion of temptations to indolence, by habits of early rising, by a frequent interchange of employment, and by strict adherence to regularity of plan, so much was accomplished.” After enumerating a long list of his extraordinary acquirements, it is said, that the relaxations which he chose for himself, were general reading, and rational conversation; these were his amusements.

Then came the following manuscript.

“I am an only child, and my mamma was always very fond of me, only she would send me to school. When I went home last vacation, grand-mamma made me a present of a real diamond ring; but Mrs. L—— does not like me to wear it. I hope I shall go and see grand-mamma again next Christmas. I am ten years old. I am learning music, and French, and geography, and to net purses; the

latter of which I like pretty well: this is all I can think of."

The next evening was occupied by some account of the early piety, and subsequent religious attainments of *Madame Guion*. The manuscript which succeeded was as follows.

"M. N. had the happiness to possess very kind and pious parents. She enjoyed so many advantages under their care, that it was surprising she did not profit more by them. There were many faults in her temper, which they endeavoured to subdue; and it is hoped that her own efforts, added to their kind admonitions will, in some degree, prove successful. They took great pains, especially, to impress her mind with religion; and though she has been often very thoughtless, and has broken many resolutions, yet I hope—yet it is hoped, the impression will never wear off. Her kind parents sent her to Mrs. I——'s school at the age of eleven; wishing her to attain every kind of knowledge that might be useful to her. Here she had great advantages, which were not improved as they might have been. However, she did take some pleasure in her pursuits; and sometimes felt a glow of delight to think, that as others of whom she had read, made great proficiency with fewer opportunities, that she also might, by diligence, do the same. It was a great encouragement to her to recollect, that it is industry, ra-



ther than genius, that is oftenest crowned with success. M. N. thought she should never forget the kindness of her governess; and that she should always cherish an affectionate remembrance of her school-fellows."

It will readily be believed, that this last little history was heard with a smile of affectionate approbation by Mrs. I——. When they had arrived at the conclusion of the manuscripts, she spoke to the young people to this effect.

"My dear girls, I would gladly have spared you any pain you may have felt from this contrast of your own characters and attainments with those of others, if I had not hoped some good might result from it. You have *felt* the contrast, some of you have, I am sure. I wished you to do so; but not for your discouragement; far otherwise. Happily it is not the *whole* of your lives that these little histories comprehend. It is not, then, too late for any of you to become excellent;—to become as superior to what you now are, as these individuals were to the generality of those around them. It is not yet too late for you to excel in any useful attainment: there is no proud spirit, or evil temper but may yet be subdued; no bad habit but may be conquered; no good one but may be acquired. That your talents, or even your virtues, should become celebrated, is indeed neither probable nor desirable; but that you may, each in your separ-

rate spheres, attain to moral, and even to mental superiority, is not only very desirable, but very probable, I might almost say, *certain*, if you so determine;—if you exert energy of mind, and resolve that it *shall be so*; and if you humbly, but diligently persevere in the right means. Come,” said she, returning the papers to their respective writers, “you may now destroy these histories if you please; determining that they shall no longer be applicable to yourselves; and resolving henceforward so to act that your characters may supply records, at which you need not blush at a future day. It may be useful to you to bear in mind this idea; and to inquire, from time to time, if you are pursuing that course, which would be likely to furnish *good* materials to your biographer.”

## XXXI.

### THE PHILOSOPHER'S SCALES.

IN days of yore, as Gothic fable tells,  
When learning dimly gleamed from grated cells,  
When wild Astrology's distorted eye  
Shunned the fair field of true philosophy,  
And wandering through the depths of mental night,  
Sought dark predictions 'mid the worlds of light :—  
When curious Alchymy, with puzzled brow,  
Attempted things that Science laughs at now,  
Losing the useful purpose she consults,  
In vain chimeras and unknown results :—  
In those grey times there lived a reverend sage,  
Whose wisdom shed its lustre on the age.  
A monk he was, immured in cloistered walls,  
Where now the ivy'd ruin crumbling falls.  
'Twas a profound seclusion that he chose ;  
The noisy world disturbed not that repose :  
The flow of murmuring waters, day by day,  
And whistling winds that forced their tardy way  
Through reverend trees, of ages growth, that made, .  
Around the holy pile a deep monastic shade ;

The chanted psalm, or solitary prayer—  
Such were the sounds that broke the silence there.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Twas here, when his rites sacerdotal were o'er,  
In the depth of his cell with its stone-covered floor,  
Resigning to thought his chimerical brain,  
He formed the contrivance we now shall explain :  
But whether by magic or alchymy's powers  
We know not, indeed 'tis no business of ours :  
Perhaps it was only by patience and care,  
At last that he brought his invention to bear.  
In youth 'twas projected ; but years stole away,  
And ere 'twas complete he was wrinkled and grey ;  
But success is secure unless energy fails ;  
And at length he produced *The Philosopher's Scales*.

What were they?—you ask : you shall presently  
see ;  
These scales were not made to weigh sugar and tea ;  
O no ;—for such properties wondrous had they,  
That qualities, feelings, and thoughts they could  
weigh ;  
Together with articles small or immense,  
From mountains or planets, to atoms of sense :  
Nought was there so bulky, but there it could lay ;  
And nought so ethereal, but there it would stay ;  
And nought so reluctant, but in it must go ;  
All which some examples more clearly will show.

The first thing he tried was the head of *Voltaire*,  
Which retained all the wit that had ever been there ;  
As a weight, he threw in a torn scrap of a leaf,  
Containing the prayer of the penitent thief ;  
When the skull rose aloft with so sudden a spell,  
As to bound like a ball on the roof of the cell.

Next time he put in *Alexander the Great*,  
With a garment that *Dorcas* had made—for a weight ;  
And though clad in armour from sandals to crown,  
The hero rose up, and the garment went down.

A long row of alms houses, amply endowed,  
By a well-esteemed pharisee, busy and proud,  
Now loaded one scale, while the other was prest  
By those mites the poor widow dropped into the  
chest ;—  
Up flew the endowment, not weighing an ounce,  
And down, down, the farthing's worth came with a  
bounce.

Again, he performed an experiment rare :  
A monk, with austerities bleeding and bare,  
Climbed into his scale ; in the other was laid  
The heart of our *Howard*, now partly decayed ;  
When he found, with surprise, that the whole of his  
brother  
Weighed less, by some pounds, than this bit of the  
other.

By further experiments (no matter how)  
He found that ten chariots weighed less than one  
plough.

A sword, with gilt trappings, rose up in the scale,  
Though balanced by only a ten-penny nail :  
A shield and a helmet, a buckler and spear,  
Weighed less than a widow's uncrystallized tear.  
A lord and a lady went up at full sail,  
When a bee chanced to light on the opposite scale.  
Ten doctors, ten lawyers, two courtiers, one earl,  
Ten counsellor's wigs full of powder and curl,  
All heaped in one balance, and swinging from  
thence,  
Weighed less than some atoms of candour and  
sense ;—

A first-water diamond, with brilliants begirt,  
Than one good potato, just washed from the dirt ;  
Yet, not mountains of silver and gold would suffice,  
One pearl to outweigh—'twas the " pearl of great  
price."

At last the whole world was bowled in at the  
gate ;  
With the soul of a beggar to serve for a weight ;  
When the former sprang up with so strong a rebuff,  
That it made a vast rent, and escaped at the roof ;  
Whence, balanced in air, it ascended on high,  
And sailed up aloft, a balloon in the sky :

While the scale with the soul in, so mightily fell,  
That it jerked the philosopher out of his cell.

## MORAL.

DEAR reader, if e'er self-deception prevails,  
We pray you to try *The Philosopher's Scales* :  
But if they are lost in the ruins around,  
Perhaps a good substitute thus may be found :—  
Let *judgment* and *conscience* in circles be cut,  
To which strings of *thought* may be carefully put :  
Let these be made even with caution extreme,  
And *impartiality* use for a beam :  
Then bring those good actions which pride over-  
rates,  
And tear up your *motives* to serve for the weights.

## XXXII.

JOHN XI. 21.

*“ Lord, if thou hadst been here.”*

SOME time ago, it happened, in a certain city, that the tranquillity of the inhabitants was disturbed by the sudden collection of a great concourse of people. Nothing excites more curiosity than such a circumstance: and so it was now. Persons of all descriptions ran out of their houses, or stood at their doors, to inquire the cause, and to see the approaching multitude. We may imagine, in one of the principal streets, the eager spectators awaiting the gradual advancing of the crowd. At first they heard only the distant murmur; but now the sound of a multitude of steps, and of innumerable voices, are distinctly heard. It comes nearer and nearer; now it has entered their street; and the foremost in the concourse are visible. The gazers look on with a mixed feeling of curiosity and alarm; multitudes appear; the street fills from side to side; and now they distinguish something like standards, waving above the heads of the people. These, which



appear to be green branches, are borne in triumph by the exulting throng. For they soon perceive that this is no tumultuous assembly; it is a peaceable procession. The shouting of many voices is heard; but they seem to be singing a triumphal chorus. At length the spectators distinguish a part where the crowd is thickest, and where the green boughs seem to concentrate; to this part every eye is directed; and each spectator waits anxiously till it arrives opposite his own dwelling: it is then that they discern, among the moving branches, the form of one raised a little above the crowd: all are eager to catch a glimpse of Him; His aspect is dignified and serene: His attire is simple: He looks mildly on the surrounding multitude: every one inquires, saying, "Who is this?"—and the multitude say—"This is Jesus."

Reader, if you had been there, what would you have felt? would you not earnestly have desired that the procession might stop, if but for one moment, before your door, that you might have had a more distinct view? and what if Jesus had turned and looked upon you? could you have borne that look? There were many young ones, like yourself, who saw that sight: many of the young daughters of Jerusalem who joined in that chorus. It was, you recollect, *children* who strewed branches in the way, and cried "Hosanna in the highest:" suppose *you* had been one of those children! But this,

you say, was impossible ; these events happened many hundred years ago, and in a place far distant from England. And yet may it not be useful to endeavour to realize the scene for a moment ; and to inquire what would have been your sensations, or what they would now be, if Jesus himself were to pass by. Especially as in this case, the circumstances of time and place make little essential alteration ; because, “ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever ; ” and it is He who says “ I am with you always.”

“ Jesus is gone above the skies,  
Where our weak senses reach him not ; ”

and because we cannot now behold him with our mortal eyes, how apt we are to forget his presence with us. Ask yourself, reader, how you would wish to have been employed : what you would have chosen as the subject of your thoughts, on such an occasion :—Would you not have shrunk from his view, had they been occupied as they frequently now are ? Which of all the vanities that engross your heart and your time would you have chosen to expose to the eye of Jesus ? Do you reply “ *Lord, if thou hadst been there, I should have taken care to be suitably engaged.* ” Remember then, that He is passing by ; His eye is upon you ; “ there is not a word in your tongue, nor a thought in your heart, but lo, he knoweth it altogether.”

During the Saviour's visible abode on earth, there were many private companies which he honoured with his presence. When he was bidden to a feast, he condescended to go; not for his own entertainment, but that he might "be about his Father's business." Now, might it not have a good effect, sometimes, when we are in company, to say to ourselves, "Suppose we had lived in those days, and that the Lord Jesus was one of this party;—what difference would it make in my feelings, in my behaviour, in my conversation? what difference should I have made in my *dress*, if He had been invited to day? should I not then have remembered some of the apostle's hints about "gold and pearls and costly array?" should I not at least, have been careful to be clothed in *modest* apparel? Say not in your heart, "*Lord, if thou hadst been here*, I should have acted, spoken, and dressed differently, for does He not still know "our down sitting and up rising;" does He not "compass our path;" is He not "acquainted with all our ways?" yes, wherever we are, His holy eye beholds every impropriety of dress and of demeanour; should not this be some check?

It is recorded by the evangelist, that once, "as Jesus entered into the city he hungered:" and this was no solitary instance. O reader! if you had lived then, and if He had passed your door, and if He would but have accepted such refreshments as

you could have offered Him, how happy, how highly honoured would you have thought yourself! There are few indeed, however lightly they may, in fact, esteem the Saviour, but would gladly offer Him such hospitality, if the opportunity were now presented. Well, the opportunity is presented. There were many women in those days, who “ministered to Him of their substance;” and there are many men and women in these days who do the same. We have his own word for this;—“inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me;” and “the poor ye have always with you.” What an honour does Christ put upon us, in allowing us still to minister to Him! If any one then should say, “*Lord, if thou hadst been here,* how happy should we have been to make an entertainment for thee, and to give thee the best that our table affords!” let them try their sincerity by this test: let them inquire, Do we feed the Lord’s poor? is it our pleasure and business to minister to the necessities of the saints? if not, they may be assured that Jesus would not value their officious attentions to Himself: for if they really loved Him they would “keep his commandments.”

But, reader, when Jesus hungered, would you, had He passed your door, willingly have parted with any luxury, any superfluous article of dress, to procure Him refreshment?—Then assuredly you will also be willing to deny yourself such things now,

that you may have something to give to His members; and if you do so, this is your reward, that you "do it unto Him."

These thoughts are applicable when we are in circumstances that need His special help. Are we sick, or are any dear to us in danger? let us not say, "*Lord, if thou hadst been here*, I, or my friends, should not die;" For behold, the power of the Lord is still present to heal: it is He who gives to the physician his skill, and to means efficacy; and when he withholds it, it is because "it seems good in his sight."

But the recollection of the Saviour's constant presence, is never so consolatory as when we feel our need of a spiritual physician. Young reader, are you ever concerned about the welfare of your soul? do you ever feel your need of a Saviour, but doubt whether He will hear you? do you feel uncertain where to seek Him? did you ever exclaim, "*Lord, if thou hadst been here*, I would have come to thee like the poor leper, and have said, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean?" O then, no longer say in thine heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ from above?" seeing He is ever nigh thee; and if thou wilt but come to Him, and believe in thine heart, and hear the word that He whispers there, "thou shalt be saved."

Then how gladly will you join the triumphal

chorus with those children of old, saying, "Blessed is the Son of David! Hosannah in the highest!"

"Not with our mortal eyes  
Have we beheld the Lord;  
Yet we rejoice to hear his name,  
And love him in his word."

### XXXIII.

#### A PERSON OF CONSEQUENCE.

HAVING announced in the title what sort of company may be expected, our readers, we hope, will prepare themselves with their best bows and most courteous behaviour. Perhaps they may imagine they already hear the rattling of wheels, the trampling of horses, and then the thundering rap that bespeaks high company. Whether they will be disappointed or otherwise, will depend upon their respective tastes and habits, when we beg leave to introduce little *Betsey Bond*, daughter of

John Bond, the journeyman carpenter. The truth is, that until her present introduction to the readers of the Youth's Magazine, she, like Cowper's lace-maker,

“ Had ne'er been heard of half a mile from home.”

So that it behoves us to give our reasons for denominating this poor child, who is but just turned of twelve years old, *a person of consequence*.

Now if our readers could but take a walk into a neighbouring village, and enter the cottage where Betsey lives;—if they could only know how much she had been missed, and how often she had been wanted, only during her present absence from home, the thing would explain itself.

Those persons are of most *consequence* in the world, who would be most missed if they were out of it. By *missed*, it is not merely meant that the places and persons that now know them would then know them no more; for this meaning would apply to the most insignificant or the most troublesome people that breathe; but by *missed* we understand that their place in society, whether it be high or low, large or small, is not likely to be so well filled up. Now, according to this explanation, how many persons of consequence there are, who are, really, of no consequence at all!

Betsey's parents are but poor people; they have

a large family, and her mother has an ill state of health.—In order to make a little addition to her husband's earnings, she exhibits in her cottage window a few articles for sale :—such as, a scanty assortment of tea, tobacco, and snuff; papers of pins, shoestrings, and gingerbread; twopenny loaves, brass thimbles, and suckers; earthenware, button-moulds, and red-herrings. Now with this concern, bad health, and *always* a baby in arms, “what she should do,” as she says, “if it was not, for her Betsey, she can't tell, nor nobody else. There are five little boys, of no use in the world, that have to be looked to; and there's the baby! and there's the shop! so that, if it was'nt for Betsey!”——why Betsey is up by times in the morning, long before her mother is stirring; lights the fire, sweeps the house; washes and dresses her little brothers, gives them their breakfasts, and gets them ready to go off to school; and all this by the time her mother comes down stairs: and what a comfort it is to her, to see all this done for her, so poorly as she is of a morning! Then nobody knows but they that see it, what a good hand Betsey is for minding the shop. Though she is always busy at her needle, or washing, or ironing, or something of the kind, yet the moment the bell rings, there she is behind the counter, with a smiling face, and a civil word for every body: yes, and just as civil to a child that only comes for a farthing sucker, as to a cus-



tomer who wants two ounces of green tea. Who is it that mends John Bond's shirts so neatly; and that runs his stockings at the heel, so that they last as long again? O, why it is his daughter Betsey. And who is it that waits on her mother when she is ill, like an old nurse;—or rather *unlike* an old nurse?—this too, is Betsey. So that we may fairly appeal to our readers, whether, according to the strictest sense of the word, little Betsey Bond is not a person of *consequence*.

To render this more apparent, let us for a moment bring forward another visitor. But do let us allow poor Betsey to make her escape first; for she would colour down to her fingers' ends to be detained before such grand company. Go then Betsey; run home to your mother as fast as you can; for she wants you sadly, and is wondering "what in the world she shall do if you don't come home presently."

And now, although the young lady we are about to introduce is well dressed, well behaved, and very respectable in her connexions; we must (adhering to the definition that has been given of the term) announce her as a person of *no* consequence. It will be proper however to remark, that nothing could have surprised this young person much more than to have heard herself so described: because it was the earliest, and is still the uppermost idea in her mind, that she *is* somebody of *conse-*

*quence*. So that her astonishment at such a designation could only be exceeded by that of little Betsey Bond if she had overheard our introduction of her. It was a fundamental fault in the education of this little lady, that the first feelings of self-importance, instead of being checked, were cherished by the ill-directed fondness of her parents. Therefore we ought to pity her mistake. And now, they themselves suffer most severely from the effects of it. There is nothing that we can discover in the person, manners, or education of this girl, to distinguish her, particularly, from thousands and tens of thousands of her age and class in society. In all these respects she may pass very well; but how is it, that with nothing more to boast than is common to others she feels of so much *consequence*?

But we have yet to substantiate our charge: although indeed, in the view of the more discerning reader, this is already done. To say that a person is *consequential* is much the same thing as saying they are not of much consequence. But, more particularly, we have called this young lady of no *consequence*, because all she ever appears to aim at is to serve and to please *herself*. She has been tolerably attentive to the various branches of her education: she has some activity and cleverness in common things: she has a good taste in dress, and in other similar affairs: you may see her for hours at her instrument, or at her drawing book, or at her needle,

and might think her very industrious: but alas, alas! all this is to please *herself*. Her station in life does not indeed require that she should do such things exactly as Betsey Bond does: yet there are many little services she might render to her father and mother, to her brothers, and friends, and neighbours, which would not only endear her to them, but would render her a person of *consequence* amongst them: for activity and good nature are of great consequence in every house: but she never thinks of any thing of that kind. Her thoughts, her time, her cleverness, her industry, all, all, are made to serve one person only, and that person is, *herself*. If you see her ever so busily at work, you may be sure that she is making something that she thinks will look well on *herself*. If you meet her running up stairs, or down stairs, or going on an errand, you may depend upon it it is to get something for *herself*. And as she thinks so much of herself, all this is no wonder, because any one of so much importance must needs require as much waiting on. But surely people may be pronounced to be of no *consequence* when no other human being is the better for them. If little *Betsey Bond* were to die, her poor mother would almost break her heart: her brothers and sisters would miss her every day of their lives: there is not a neighbour all round but would lament her: indeed there is not one person in twenty but could be better spared. But as for this young lady, al-

though if she were to die, her parents, from the force of natural affection, would doubtless feel afflicted, yet even they would never be reminded of her by any little affectionate attentions which they would then miss. Her brothers and her young friends might be sorry for *her*; but they would lose nothing and miss nothing themselves. And alas! there are no poor neighbours of hers who would be any the worse off if this young lady were never to be heard of more. Now then, we again appeal to our readers (begging them to be guided by their good sense, and not to be biassed by external appearances, or common modes of judging) and inquire, which of these girls is the person of *consequence*?

*Self-importance* is a feeling very common to young people; ridiculous as it is in every body, and especially so in them. Even where it has not been fostered by the weak partiality of parents, and by the flattery of foolish friends, it is but too apt to insinuate itself into the heart of a child; in which, as Solomon says, "folly is bound up." There are, indeed, many circumstances connected with youth which tend to cherish it. The pains that are bestowed upon their education—the kind attentions which benevolent people frequently pay to the young—the notice they attract merely because they are young, may be easily misinterpreted by juvenile vanity, as though there was something particular in *them*, in distinction from other young people, to

excite all this, and to render so much pains and cost desirable. Now although this proceeds chiefly from ignorance and inexperience, yet it is always a disgusting fault; and those young persons who are possessed of natural good sense, will soon detect and discard it. They, on the contrary, who are weak and vain, and who have not the advantage of a judicious education, will most probably be so unfortunate as to remain in their mistake all their lives. Some such individuals are to be found in every neighbourhood: self-important, consequential, officious persons; who are smiled at by the wise, and laughed at by the witty.

This is no uncommon fault in these busy times. But the officiousness of such persons generally gives more trouble than their services compensate. It is those who act *quietly*, who make little noise and no pretence, who do most good—perhaps all the *real* good that is done in the world. Now, as it is a far pleasanter thing to correct this fault for ourselves than to wait till other people do it for us, it would be well for every one who may be conscious of such an infirmity, to recollect, as before hinted, that it is a feeling which persons of *real* consequence never indulge.

Let young persons, then, put some such questions as these to themselves. Do I think myself a person of consequence? if so, on what grounds?—who is the *better* for me? if I were away, who would miss

my services? would my parents lose many dutiful and affectionate attentions? would my brothers and sisters lose a kind, and accommodating, and self-denying companion? would my friends or poor neighbours be any the worse off for my removal? would one and another have to say, "Ah! if she were but here, she would have done this or that for us?" But if conscience assures us that in no such ways as these we should be missed or regretted, then, whatever our station, whatever our external advantages, whatever our opinion of ourselves may hitherto have been, we may be assured that we have not, at present, any just grounds of self-complacency: and if we are discontented with this conclusion, let us go and learn of *Betsey Bond* how to make ourselves *persons of consequence*.

## XXXIV.

### MIRTH AND CHEERFULNESS.

LITTLE Marianne returned from school one afternoon, in high spirits: one of her favourite companions accompanied her; and hastening into the garden, they had a fine game of play on the grass plot. When they were both in such a heat and so much tired that they knew not how to keep it up any longer, they left off, by mutual consent. Her friend then left her, while Marianne went into the parlour, threw herself into a chair, took off her hat and fanned herself with it. Now and then she smiled, and once laughed out, at the recollection of some droll occurrences in their play; after sitting thus nearly half an hour, she began to grow sleepy, and at length actually nodded. She would now probably have had a long nap, if it had not been that with one nod her head dropped so far as to wake her thoroughly: she then rose up and walked languidly to the window. It was very fine when Marianne left the garden, but it had sud-

denly clouded over, and by this time had begun to rain.

“What a dismal evening!” exclaimed she, in a drowsy voice, “how dull it is!” then placing both her elbows on the window, and leaning her head on her hands, she stood for another half hour in that position; watching the rain, as it splashed on the flag stones in the street, or tracing the drops that slowly chased each other down the long panes of glass. At length she heaved a deep sigh, and, after a short interval, another, which terminated in a dismal yawn, and “O dear! O dear!”

“My dear Marianne, what is the matter with you?” said her mamma.

MARIANNE. Nothing mamma, nothing particular.

MOTHER. *Nothing* particular, I often find, means *something* particular.

MARIANNE. No, but I assure you, mamma, it was nothing at all.

MOTHER. Then pray, my love, do not gape and groan, and say “O dear,” for nothing at all.

Here followed a long silence, which was at length broken by another deep sigh.

MOTHER. What is the matter, now, Marianne?

MARIANNE. Nothing particular, mamma.

MOTHER. Nay, do not give me that foolish answer again: come now, I must know what makes you so uncomfortable this afternoon.

MARIANNE. Nothing, mamma, only that it is so



dull and dismal, and I'm tired, and I've got nothing to play with, and nothing to do, and I'm so dull!

MOTHER. Nothing to play with, and nothing to do! that is sad indeed: are you sure, my dear, that you have nothing to do?

MARIANNE. Nothing particular, that I know of.

MOTHER. Then I am sure it will be a kindness to find you a job: see here is some cotton that I want to have wound; and as I have a great deal to do, I think it will be a mutual accommodation. Go and fetch the reel, this will be a nice job for you.

Marianne slowly and reluctantly moved her elbows from their station, though they ached with leaning on them so long; and as she went to fetch the reel she thought she had rather have stood there still, looking at the muddy street, than do this job for her mamma. However, when she had found it, and had placed the cotton upon it, and when she began to wind the cotton she found herself rather agreeably disappointed. There seemed that desirable medium between work and play in this employment, that exactly suited a person who was rather lazy, and yet tired of doing nothing. The reel moved round nimbly; candles came in; Marianne's spirits revived, the invariable consequence of which was, that she began to talk.

“Ah! that is right,” said she, “I am glad the

candles are come; now one can see what one is about. I wonder how large this ball of cotton will be when it's all wound: pretty large I fancy. No, no, Mrs. Puss, this is not for you, I can promise you; *s cat! s cat!* One, two, three, four, five, six;—I do think this reel must go round twenty times in a minute. There now, here's a knot! how tiresome! that's the worst of winding cotton; so you won't come, won't you? then you must break, that's all. There, now we shall go on again. One, two, three, four: O, I shall have done this job in a minute."

MOTHER. So, you have found your tongue again, Marianne.

MARIANNE. O yes mamma, no fear of that.

MOTHER. Now then, perhaps you can tell me what was the matter just now when you were groaning so dismally.

MARIANNE. O really, mamma, there was nothing the matter; only one is miserable sometimes, you know; I often am; but then I soon grow cheerful again; that is one comfort.

MOTHER. Stay; I think you have used the wrong word: you mean that you soon get *merry* again.

MARIANNE. Well it's all the same.

MOTHER. All the same! O no, very different indeed. The most wicked and miserable persons

in the world may sometimes be merry; but it is impossible they should ever be cheerful: cheerfulness you know implies an easy, contented, serene mind. Mirth is only excited by some temporary amusement; and this may happen when the heart is aching, and the conscience stinging all the time. A cheerful mind and a guilty conscience can never exist together. Now, although there is no objection to a little girl like you, being merry now and then, yet, it is very requisite that you should not only learn to distinguish between words of such different meanings, but that now, while you are young, you should cultivate those habits and tempers with which *cheerfulness* will grow; that you may *feel* the difference as well as know it. If this had been done already, Marianne, you would have escaped that fit of melancholy this afternoon, and many a one before it.

MARIANNE. As to that, I fancy every body is in a mopish mood now and then, when they are dull, and when it rains.

MOTHER. Really, Marianne, we should be badly off in this climate, if we must always be dull when it rains. To be sure, if every body was obliged to stand still at their windows, and watch the drops as they fall, it would be no wonder if it were so.

MARIANNE. Well mamma, it was only because just then I had nothing else to do.

MOTHER. That, I grant you, is a reason—the best reason, Marianne, that you have yet given me for being miserable. But this was your own fault; there is no one, young or old, but may find something to do if they please.

MARIANNE. No really; just then there was nothing in the world that I could think of to do, that I liked.

MOTHER. That you liked? O, that was it. Now then I believe we shall arrive at the true cause of this fit of melancholy; you were idle: Now I perfectly understand what it was that made you say “O dear, O dear,” and gape and groan: yes, indeed, it is a miserable thing to be idle. Indolent people may often have a fit of mirth, or a good game of play, but their mirth is sure to subside into dulness, they can never know what it is to be *cheerful*.

MARIANNE. But indeed, mamma, I don’t think it was being idle that made me miserable then; it was because I felt so miserable that I did not like to do any thing.

MOTHER. I think you mistake there: suppose, now, when you first came in from play you had thought of winding this cotton for me; and suppose by a little effort you had overcome the inclination you felt to sit still, and had actually done it; do you think you would then have felt so dull and

dismal as you did standing still for three quarters of an hour at the window?

MARIANNE. No, because then I should not have had time to see the bad weather, and to think how dull it was.

MOTHER. So I thought: it is thus that regular employment keeps off those capricious fits of melancholy to which the indolent are always liable. When useful and industrious people are unhappy they can always tell you the reason: but the idle are very often so, when, as you said, nothing at all is the matter.

MARIANNE. Well, I should very much like to be cheerful always.

MOTHER. It is a desirable thing, indeed, my dear! but then you must see that you lay a good foundation for cheerfulness: and this can be formed only by habits of industry; by good tempers; in one word, by a peaceful conscience. While you are a child, the difference between *high* spirits and *good* spirits—between *mirth* and *cheerfulness* is not so apparent: but by and bye, when you will no longer feel inclined to be merry, you must either be habitually cheerful or habitually dull. Cheerfulness differs essentially from mirth, in its being a lasting companion, one that does not forsake us even in old age. It endures through life; bears persons up under its calamities and crosses; and when genuine,

shines brightest as we descend into the vale of years. "In laughter there is sorrow; and the end of mirth is often heaviness;" but christian cheerfulness has no such alloy.

## XXXV.

## PSALM CXIX. 67.

*"Before I was afflicted I went astray."*

THERE are few subjects less likely to interest the minds of the young than that of affliction. It is a thing which, generally speaking, they know only by description. They are therefore ill qualified to sympathize in the trials of others; nor are they prone to anticipate trouble for themselves. Very young persons, with but few exceptions, have beheld the world only as a scene of enjoyment: to them the past appears all sunshine, and the future seems glittering with hope and joy. The word *affliction* is scarcely understood: They are aware that some persons meet with misfortunes; but these, by their

sagacity and forethought they hope to avoid. They see that others are afflicted with painful diseases: but the vigour and bloom of their youth leads them to imagine that *they* have no such calamities to dread. And when they hear it asserted, from authority they cannot contradict, that "man is born to trouble," and that, "in this world we must have tribulation," they flatter themselves that *their* portion of it will not arrive until a time when the chief enjoyments of life must necessarily cease; a time when they fancy they shall have *no great objection* to being afflicted; especially, according to the general and unrealizing ideas they attach to the word. It is not needful to use arguments in order to dispel these illusions. The first approach of real suffering, in whatever form it may appear, will do more than a series of the most elaborate discourses to inform them of the reality, the nature, the use, the painfulness, and the impossibility of escaping—affliction.

In the mean time we hope to justify our choice of a subject which may have been thought unsuitable, by directing our attention principally to the *first* word of the text. When the Psalmist says, "*before* I was afflicted I went astray," he refers to that period of life, and to those circumstances, in which most young persons are placed; to whom, therefore, these words must be singularly appropriate.

There was a time then, it appears, when David knew nothing of affliction. While he was yet a stripling, fair and ruddy, keeping those few sheep in the wilderness, the world appeared to him as smiling and agreeable as it may do to the reader. He would have been surprised could he then have read as his own, such language as bitter experience afterwards wrung from him, while he was yet a stranger to the tyranny of a patron, the ingratitude of friends, the malice of enemies, the harshness of relations, the rebellion of children, the disaffection of subjects; to domestic calamities, and public cares: he did not, certainly, anticipate his declension from the good ways of God: nor had he yet discovered that earthly happiness is, itself, unsatisfying; which would probably have surprised him more than the rest. David possessed a lively and fertile imagination: and while leading a pastoral life, he was doubtless alive to the beauties of nature; and his enthusiasm was kindled amid the splendours of distant worlds. Probably with a mind elevated and excited by such contemplations, he was not aware how little the feelings of genuine devotion mingled with these intellectual enjoyments,—and would have been astonished to know that in after years, when better acquainted with himself and with God, he should be compelled to exclaim, “My soul cleaveth to the dust.”

But when, with the sanguine feelings of youth, the world in its more captivating forms began to



invite his regard;—when in the sunshine of royal favour, and under the secret consciousness of being himself the subject of high predictions, he would have thought it strange, could he have foreseen that he should ever make those sad exclamations; “I am afflicted very much;—sorrow and anguish have taken hold upon me;—I found trouble and sorrow!”

But when in addition to the splendours of a court, the honours of a favourite, the fascinations of society—when in addition to all this, the bewitching voice of *fame* first surprised him:—when the gratifying chorus of “Saul his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” reached his ears—could he then have believed that he should ever be tempted to say, even in his haste, “all men are liars!” Had this been foreseen he would have thought he was destined to be one of the most unfortunate of men. Whereas he was only destined, like other persons, to know the world, mankind, and himself.

It seems, however, that a considerable portion of David's early life had passed *before* he was afflicted: and as this is according to the most usual dispensations of Providence with us, it may be useful to inquire what effect was produced upon him by this exemption from troubles. Of this the text fully informs us;—“*before* I was afflicted,” he says, “I went astray.” Such an acknowledgment may, therefore, very properly, be improved by way of caution

to all those who are at present in similar circumstances. *Now*, reader, *before* you are afflicted, consider what imminent danger there is of your going astray. David, you see, did: although from his youth he was piously inclined, and of a devout and contemplative turn of mind. Certainly he was more thoughtful than many young persons appear to be: nor can we suppose that his youth was disgraced by any immoralities; but yet, he went astray. The world appeared so engaging to him, society so enchanting, friendship so sweet, that his heart clung to these things. He thought of God with reverence; but he did not love Him supremely; nor was he, at this time, deeply affected with the value of his soul, with the excellence of religion: he did not then know, that "*fulness of joy*" is only to be experienced in the divine presence: and he probably mistook some paltry streams of earthly happiness, for those "*rivers of pleasures*," which he afterwards found flow only at the right hand of God. Yes, it was with David as it is with many other persons before they are afflicted—he loved the world too well to seek God supremely, and in *earnest*.

How necessary then, it is for those who are yet rejoicing in their youth, and have known no adversity, to inquire whether they are not going astray! and if conscience assures them that they are wandering far from God, let them be assured that, if they continue to do so, one of these alternatives is inevit-

able;—either He will visit them with some trial which will at once poison their present enjoyments, and, as it were, compel them to seek a better portion; or they will be abandoned to earthly happiness, such as it is, and left to take their portion, here and hereafter, with the men of this world. Consider again, that to turn in heart to God, while the world is yet smiling, is far more pleasing to Him, more honourable, and a far more satisfactory test of sincerity, than to delay to do so till its enjoyments are withdrawn from us. It is a mercy to be able at *last* to say, “*Now* have I kept thy word;” but far happier are they, who having never yet been visited with severe affliction, and for whom this life has still many charms, can yet profess, “Thou art my portion, O Lord, in the land of the living.” O, reader, do not think to wait until God calls you by the terrors of his Providence; this is tempting him indeed! You know not how sudden, nor how tremendous that voice may be; nor can you tell whether it will come in mercy or in judgment. Therefore, “*now* is the accepted time;” now, *before* you are afflicted.

But it does not always happen that childhood and youth are exempt from suffering: some are called “to bear the yoke in their youth:” and the Scripture says, it is *good* to do so. There are those who have “*chosen* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;” even for the season of youth. But as

afflictions are not in *themselves* desirable, let those who are the subjects of them seriously inquire whether it is good for *them* to have been so visited. If trials do *not* produce the peaceable fruits of righteousness, the afflicted are, indeed, “of all men most miserable.” To be loaded with a painful, diseased body, or to look around on a friendless world, and yet to have “no consolation in Christ,” no good hope towards God, this is adversity indeed! For let it not be supposed that afflictions alone are sufficient to turn the heart from idols to serve the living God. When the dresser of the vineyard had digged around the unfruitful tree, *then* he was to wait and *see* if it would bear fruit. Thus, when the means are afforded, and when individuals are placed by Providence in advantageous circumstances, then the Lord waits to see if they improve them: if not, *after that* He will cut them down. O, then, whatever others do, “if any is *afflicted* let him pray!” let him humbly cry, “Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised: turn thou me and I shall be turned.”

But some have been afflicted, who having cried to God in their distress, He heard their cry and delivered them. The cloud is blown over; their sky is again clear. How seriously should such inquire whether they can adopt the language of the text throughout—“but *now* I have kept thy word:” or have they forgotten their sorrows, their fears, and

their resolutions; and the views they had when in trouble, of the value of their souls? Will they venture to wait the issue of another stroke? Will they add to the anguish of a second trial the bitterness of not having improved the first? Rather let them at once set themselves to rear the peaceable fruits of righteousness:—It may be they have begun to put forth the tender bud:—*afterwards*, the apostle says, afflictions produce them. The actual time of trial is sometimes too overwhelming for much to be done; but *now* is the advantageous and hopeful season. O, let it not escape unimproved.

These words are full of consolation to the afflicted ones who feel that sorrow is doing its kind office; who can already say, “It is good for me to be afflicted.” Let them be comforted by the experience of David. He, like them, “*before* he was afflicted went astray;” and they, like him (if they do not suffer present impressions to die away) will have the unspeakable happiness of being able to add —“*now* have I kept thy word.”

## XXXVI.

“ I CAN DO WITHOUT IT.”

THIS is one of the best mottos in the world or one of the worst, according to the meaning attached to it: which will appear from the conduct of two young people who were acquainted with each other; each of whom happened to take the above sentence into frequent use. Eliza disliked and ridiculed the manner in which it was applied by Ruth; and Ruth could not but disapprove of the way in which it was used by Eliza. The purpose to which Ruth appropriated the words, and the way in which she came to adopt them as her motto, shall be explained in the present paper.

Her parents were persons of superior education, but their income was limited and narrow; so that they were compelled by their circumstances, as well as inclined by their good sense, to study economy. Ruth entered into the prudent and sensible views of her parents at an early age; and her general conduct gave them so much satisfaction,

that on the day she was fourteen, her mother informed her that from that time she should be intrusted with the purchase and entire management of her own dress; and that her annual allowance would be increased accordingly. The sum now allotted to her was such as her mother considered sufficient, with prudence and management, to meet all her real wants and reasonable wishes.

When Ruth received her first quarterage, the possession of a sum of money so much larger than she had ever been mistress of before, made her feel a little giddy. However, she deposited it safely in her desk, resolving not to touch it till it was really wanted. Economy, her mother told her, did not consist in grudging to supply our wants, but in restraining the desire for superfluities. Not many days after she had entered upon this new responsibility, Ruth accompanied her father and mother to a neighbouring market town, where they frequently went to make purchases, as they lived in the country. She had often been with them on former occasions; but it was with sensations entirely new that she now walked through the busy streets of this town, and passed its long rows of well-furnished shops. Heretofore she had surveyed the various tempting articles they exhibited merely as an amusing *spectacle*; and with no more idea of *possessing* any of them than one has of purchasing the curiosities of a museum. But now circum-

stances were altered. Here were things, and pretty things too, that she might have if she *pleased*. And this thought, notwithstanding Ruth's prudent temper and good resolutions, presented itself to her mind temptingly.

The first thing that struck her as a *real desideratum* was a steel purse, of which she saw several, glittering in a jeweller's window. There were also silver ones, but of these she did not allow herself to think. A new purse, now that she had so much more to do with money, appeared very suitable for a first purchase.

"Mamma," said she, touching her mother's elbow, "would you stop one minute? I think I should like one of those purses." Her mother, who was aware that this day's excursion would prove rather trying to her daughter's prudence, replied, "yes, I will stop a minute; but we will wait *here*, that you may have time to consider, before you go in, whether you *want* a new purse." "To be sure," said Ruth, after a moment's thought, "I have my old silk one; but then——ah well, *I can do without it*," she added; and without giving another look at the shop window, she hastened on.

"Now," said her mother, "you have saved five or six shillings by that moment's consideration."

At this time beaver hats, trimmed with satin, were much worn. There was a capital hatter's in the town; where two large bow windows, fur-



nished with every variety of shade and shape, to suit all fancies, caught the eye of the fair passenger : some loaded with nodding plumes, others with most becoming pink satin linings, and trimmings to match ; and some with broad embossed bands, and dangling tassels.

"Mamma," said Ruth again, as they passed this shop, "would you stop one minute? don't you think a beaver hat would be very warm and comfortable for me this winter? and besides, how it would save my straw! This is a very pretty one, is it not?—just my size I should think :—shall we go in and inquire the price?"

"If you wish it, we will," replied her mother ; so they entered the shop ; where a genteelly dressed lady was then in the act of purchasing one of the very same shape. Ruth seeing this, jogged her mother, that she might notice such a sanction to her own choice. They now inquired the price of the article in question.

"That hat, ladies, is one guinea, only," said the shopkeeper.

Ruth darted an inquiring look at her mother, to know whether she thought it cheap or dear.

"You recollect your straw hat, I suppose, my dear," said her mother. "Straws, ma'am," interrupted the shopkeeper, are now considered *uncommonly common*;—quite *out*, in fact. We have a surprising demand for beavers at the present time ;

our manufacturer assures me he cannot get them made up fast enough."

Ruth's respect for *beavers* and contempt of *straws* were wonderfully heightened by this speech.

"Allow me, ma'am," continued he, "to recommend the young lady to try it on." Ruth knowing this would be a hazardous experiment, again looked at her mother: she then reflected a moment; (which it must be confessed is a difficult thing to do *dispassionately* in a room full of hats and bonnets) and then whispered to her mother, "I wish we had not come in, for after all, *I could do without it.*" "I am very sorry we have given you any trouble, Sir," said her mother to the shopkeeper, "I believe we shall not purchase one this morning."

The shopkeeper bowed coldly; and whether he or Ruth felt most disappointed it would be hard to determine.

Soon afterwards her mother had occasion to go to the stationer's. This shop displayed a great variety of articles of different sorts and value, from toys to telescopes. After looking about for some time, Ruth said to her mother, "I am very glad I did not buy a beaver hat, how much better it would be to have something that would *last*! see, are not these pretty?" added she, pointing to some small plated inkstands, "they are only fifteen shillings, I find." Her mother smiled. "Ah, you are thinking of my writing desk: very true; I can certainly *do without*

*it*," continued Ruth; and with this consideration she got safely out of the shop.

Her mother had now finished her business in the town: but as they were returning to the inn, a pastry-cook's window reminded Ruth of a new want. "Mamma," said she, "are not you hungry? I am very; had not we better go in and have something?"

"I thought you brought some biscuits in your basket," said her mother; "True, so I did," said Ruth, "*so we can do without it.*"

When they reached the inn, the chaise not being ready, Ruth's mother drew out her pencil, and wrote something on the back of a bill; which she then handed to her daughter, saying, "See my dear, if I have cast this up right." Ruth took the paper, and read the following account.

	£	s.	d.
A steel purse .....	0	5	6
Beaver hat .....	1	1	0
Plated inkstand .....	0	15	0
Sundry tarts .....	0	0	10
<hr/>			
Total, saved by <i>doing without it</i> ,	£2	2	4

Ruth smiled, and said, "Yes, mamma, it is quite right; and if it had not been for you I should have been *quite wrong*." "Nay, Ruth," replied her mother, "I must give you some credit this morning, for having yielded so easily to my suggestion: pru-

dence does not consist in not being tempted, but in not *yielding* to temptation. Yes, you have saved at least 2l. 2s. 4d. this morning by the timely use of those few simple words; and I think they would form an excellent motto for you, now that you are entrusted with the disposal of money." "Yes," said Ruth, quite delighted, "*I can do without it*: this shall be my motto; I will write it on the lid of my money box; it is an excellent motto, mamma!"

When Ruth returned home, she was pleased to think not only that she had saved her money, but that not one of the articles she had wished for was really wanted. She now congratulated herself that, to the mere pleasure of novelty, which would have lasted but a few hours, she had not sacrificed a sum which would, by and by, purchase things that she would really want, and that she could *not* do without. Unnecessary expences always rob either ourselves or others: we either deprive ourselves of something essential to our comfort afterwards; or defraud the the poor and destitute of their just claims. *Economy* and *liberality* go hand in hand.

Ruth found, during many future years, that the motto thus early adopted, was of excellent use as a check upon her expenditure; indeed it led her to form habits of self-denial which were of essential importance to her during life. She was always dressed with a graceful simplicity, far more pleasing to persons of good sense and good taste than a more

studied style; and thus, by purchasing only such things as she could not with comfort and propriety do without, she had always a little overplus with which to relieve her poor neighbours, and for other useful purposes. "Ah," said she to her mother, as she was making up a flannel gown for an old *goody* who was "*sadly bad of the rheumatize*," poor Betty Brown would have been obliged *to do without this*, if I had not sometimes recollected *I can do without it*."

There is no danger of economy degenerating into covetousness, when what is saved from our needless gratification is devoted to the real wants of others.

"If I had not remembered my motto," thought she, on another occasion, "when the man called yesterday with his box of lace, I should not have had three and sixpence to spare for this Bible to day. And O, how much better I can do without a piece of lace to my frock, than my poor neighbour can do without a *Bible*!"

How many a superfluous article of dress, how many a trifle that wearies or disgusts almost as soon as possessed—how many a needless and injurious dainty to please the palate would be dispensed with, and how many more of the destitute might be relieved, if persons would but recollect, and recollect in *time*, Ruth's excellent motto—"I can do without it."

## XXXVII.

‘ I CAN DO WITHOUT IT.’

THIS, we remarked, was one of the best mottos in the world, or one of the worst. Its excellence has appeared in the use made of it by Ruth, the economist: we shall now, according to promise, proceed to show it in its opposite appropriation. This sentence, with some variations, though not professedly adopted as a motto, was frequently employed by Eliza, by way of excuse for the negligence to which the indolence of her disposition continually inclined her. She disliked, beyond every thing, that patient care which is essential to success; which is requisite in order to do any thing properly; and which experience proves to be the best, and, in the end, the shortest way in all the concerns of life.

This temper manifested itself in Eliza at an early age:—Suppose, for example, she was writing an exercise with a bad pen that spirted, or blotted, or scratched like a pin;—rather than take the trouble of mending it, she would say to herself, *It will do without it*, or *I can manage without*; and thus her writing was rarely fit to be seen.

In like manner, if a slide broke in her frock, or if the string came out of her shoe, instead of replacing them immediately, she would exclaim, "How provoking! there's that tiresome slide gone!" adding, "ah, well, *I can do without it*," and then she would beg somebody to pin it for her—a most untidy thing certainly:—or she would go half a day slip-shod for want of a shoe string. It was just the same if a stitch came undone in any part of her dress, or if she had torn a small rent in her frock: instead of recollecting that true saying—"a stitch in time saves nine," she would let it go, upon the strength of her favourite saying, till it became a long job to mend it: so that her mother used often to declare that she had more trouble with Eliza's clothes in one month, than Ruth's mamma had with her's in a whole year; and no wonder.

Eliza met with such frequent instances of the mischievous tendency of her favourite excuse, that one would have thought she might have been induced to discard it. Scarcely a day passed but she, or those around her, suffered more or less from it. Not to mention such misfortunes as the frequent falls and bruises which occurred from loose shoe strings, and the like.

One time she sustained a considerable loss for want of replacing a button to her pocket. She found it was come off one morning; and saying, as usual, *I can do without it*, she substituted a pin.

—*Pins*, though very useful things in their way, are certainly made most use of by lazy, untidy people. Things went thus for two or three days: but at last, as she was returning from a long walk, upon feeling for her handkerchief, she discovered that the pocket with all its contents had escaped. Eliza felt this loss considerably; for besides her thimble, a silver knife, a pencil case, and a purse with seven and sixpence in it, her pocket that day unfortunately contained a beautiful coral necklace which had lately been made her a present of. A very improper place for a necklace, it will be said; very true: but the case was this:—Eliza, being fond of ornaments, came down that day, prepared for her walk, with this necklace slipped over her tippet. To this her mother very properly objected, as having a tawdry and ungenteel appearance, and desired her to take it off. Eliza complied reluctantly; but instead of replacing it safely up stairs, she indolently slipped it into her pocket, and thus lost it, as related above. Another time, one of her bonnet-strings coming unstitched, she fastened it on, as usual, with a pin, and going out with it in this state, it came undone when she was walking by the river side: the wind being high, it blew her bonnet off into the water, and there she saw it sailing irrecoverably down the river, like a swan. One day her mother gave her a small phial containing an acid for taking out ink spots, and other stains; and desired her to write a



label for it.—“ Dear ! ” said Eliza, when her mother was out of hearing, “ *it will do just as well without it ;* ” so she left it as it was. Soon after, her mother feeling unwell, desired Eliza to give her a few drops of salvolatile.—She went carelessly to find the phial, and snatching up this in mistake, gave her mother a dose of the poisonous fluid. Being aware of her daughter’s careless habits, she fortunately tasted a little before taking the whole, and so discovered the mistake. Thus it was that indolent habits, sanctioned by a foolish saying, endangered even the life of her mother. Eliza felt these things ; but she considered them as accidents and *misfortunes*, not as the natural consequences of her faults, so that they made no useful impression upon her.

It too often happened that she varied her motto by the alternate use of all the personal pronouns. *He, she, they, or you, can do without it*, was as commonly heard as *it*. This was usually the case when any little service was required of her by those around ; in which case, the struggle between her inactive habits and a sense of duty was quickly decided by the use of this unfriendly sentence. Her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, as well as her neighbours, missed many a kind service by this means.

It must also be observed, that Eliza rarely applied these words to *herself* in the way of restraint. When there was any thing that *she* wished for, it was sel-

dom indeed that she said, *I can do without it*; for, to exercise self denial, requires an effort of mind much more painful to the indolent than any bodily exertion. Eliza accordingly *treated herself* with every thing she liked that she could by any means get the money to purchase; at the same time laughing at the frugal habits of her friend Ruth; and often prophesying that she would die a miser.

The inactivity and carelessness of Eliza's disposition extended to every thing in which she was called to engage, and lamentably retarded the progress of her education. Her father and mother were anxious to furnish her with every useful acquirement in their power, with a view to her future respectability, usefulness and independence. But to Eliza the acquisition of knowledge, of whatever kind, was extremely irksome. Nothing is to be attained without trouble; and trouble was the thing she could not endure. Whatever was proposed to her as a desirable study, she used to think, if not to say, that *she could do without it*. Therefore, notwithstanding the cost and pains that were bestowed upon her, she grew up ill informed and unfurnished. Even reading was a toil which she thought she could *do as well without*, unless a book happened to be merely entertaining.

It will not be imagined that a person so slothful in business should be "fervent in spirit," or active in "serving the Lord." The concerns of the soul, indeed, are the first to suffer from an indolent temper.

If “ the kingdom of heaven must suffer violence, and if even the violent can only take it by force,” how shall the feeble and languid efforts of indolence prevail? Alas, religion was one of the things that poor Eliza was contented *to do without*. In spite of a pious education, and occasional impressions, she too often excused her neglect of prayer, and other means of grace, by the secret application of her favourite sentence.

At length a time arrived, long anticipated by her parents, when their circumstances rendered it necessary that Eliza should do something for her own maintenance ; and now, notwithstanding all the pains that had been bestowed upon her education, the utmost that could be said of her, in an advertisement drawn up by her disappointed father, was to this effect,—

“ Wants a situation, as governess to the younger children in a private family, or as under teacher in a school, a young person of respectable connections who is qualified to teach the rudiments of English grammar; to superintend plain work, or to make herself useful in any way that may be required.”

How different an account would have been given of Eliza's qualifications, and in how different a sphere might she have moved, if she had not so often thought and said of this attainment, and of that pursuit, *I can do without it!*

In these humbling circumstances, she amused

herself with fruitless wishes for a *fortune*, in order that she might not be obliged to exert herself; not considering that the same inactive temper which makes a poor person helpless and dependent, renders the rich discontented and miserable.

We cannot stay to detail the subsequent misfortunes of Eliza. It is sufficient to say that a time arrived when she had some practical experience of the virtues of her motto, in a way little desired. Instead of saying, as formerly, *I can do without it*, she was compelled very often to say—I *must* do without; and that, not in reference to the luxuries of life, but to some of its most essential wants. How much better it is to say—I *can* do without it, of a superfluity, than to say—I *must* do without it, of a comfort! Let those who would avoid all danger of the latter, early enter into the spirit of the former; and let them learn nicely to distinguish between those things which, without any *real* privation *may be done without*, and those which cannot be neglected but by the sacrifice of respectability, usefulness, and happiness.

## XXXVIII.

### PSALM CXIX. 73.

*“Thy hands have made me and fashioned me, give me understanding  
that I may learn thy commandments.”*

“FOLLY,” it is said, “is bound up in the heart of a child;” and it is accordingly, a general complaint that their minds are so entirely engrossed by the toys and trifles of the age, that religious instruction makes no abiding impression upon them. There are indeed many pleasing exceptions; yet they are but exceptions to the statement. In a sad majority of instances this thoughtlessness and this forgetfulness of God continue during the still more giddy season of youth; and fix into worldliness, and final hardness of heart in the more advanced stages of maturity and old age. But that it is not always thus, there are many happy instances to testify.

A period at length arrives, not perhaps till childhood is past, when the young person begins to reflect. He is suddenly struck with some of those considerations which had heretofore been urged in vain. He considers that he must die; and yet that

he must live for ever: and although he has been told this from his infancy, yet it now strikes him with the force of a new idea. He looks round, too, upon the world, upon the universe that surrounds him, upon the works of nature, and especially upon himself, with an inquiring eye. He wonders at his own existence; and feels desires and apprehensions that were unknown to him before. To such a state of mind the language of the text seems peculiarly suitable: "*Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.*" And well would it be if, instead of yielding to the doubts, and questionings, and vain speculations which so often encumber and bewilder the minds of thoughtful and intelligent young persons, they would at once enter into the spirit of the text, and adopt its comprehensive prayer. By such means how much perplexity and confusion, how much pride and opposition, how many "high thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God," would be avoided! "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach his way."

In these words, there is first, an acknowledgment of the relation we bear to God as our Creator, *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me!* But who, it may be asked, does not know and allow this fact? there is not a child in any christian country, nor scarcely among the heathen lands, but holds *that*

truth in his creed. Yet this, like all other good truths, may be known and allowed without being felt, or in heart acknowledged. How many high-spirited young persons are there, who glorying in the grace, the strength, the agility of their frame, feel a proud independence even of God himself; who, at least, never think from whence all they are and all they have is derived! Now these words express feelings directly opposite to such a state of indifference;—the feelings of a mind alive to the recollection of being “His workmanship;”—of a mind, perhaps, suddenly aroused from insensibility, to a sense of its relation to the great Creator. Every power and faculty of the body, its beauty, and all the exquisite contrivances which the human frame exhibits, are now surveyed with emotions of interest, admiration, and gratitude. Such feelings are not natural to us, because we are “fallen from our first estate.” On the contrary, when left to ourselves, “we forget God;” “He is not in all our thoughts;” and all his beautiful and magnificent works fail to impress us with any lively recollection of Him, until His own Spirit removes the veil that is upon our hearts. Then it is that we see Him in all that surrounds us, and acknowledge with humble thankfulness that it is “He that made us and not we ourselves.” We no longer talk with a heathenish sort of admiration of the works of nature; we see

them to be the works of God: we confess that “in Him we live, and move, and have our being;”

“’Tis on his earth we stand or move,  
And ’tis his air we breathe.”

“We are His workmanship.”—What a thought is this! when we raise our eyes to behold the light, when we listen to “the sweet music of speech,” or employ any of the powers or members of the body, we are reminded of the admirable skill that contrived them: and how much better would such a remembrance be, than those vain and self-complacent feelings which are too often excited by a contemplation of these gifts of our beneficent Maker; as though the merit and the skill were our own! But when we “come to ourselves”—when our views become rectified, then, while we adore God as the Creator of our bodies, we desire also to subject ourselves to Him as “the father of our spirits,” that we may live. Yes, this is the happy consequence to which serious thought and reflection, persevered in, are sure to lead. Now the desire arises to know more of Him, and to serve Him as his creature. The individual now feels the need of *an influence*, to overcome the darkness and deadness of his mind; and to enable him to know, to adore, and to serve his Creator; that he may praise Him by whom he



was so "fearfully and wonderfully made." It was from a sense of this need that the holy Psalmist immediately adds, *Give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.*

Hitherto the mind had been grovelling amid selfish and unsatisfying enjoyments. It had not even desired the knowledge of God and his ways; and now it is conscious that things will ever continue thus without a power from on high. This is implied in the prayer of the text, *Give me understanding*: "Thou hast indeed," he would say, "wonderfully and excellently formed this curious frame of mine; but oh! let not this be all; for this body, with its admirable contrivances must die and perish; this exquisite workmanship must all be spoiled; my reins must be consumed within me; while my soul, which will for ever exist, is dark, diseased, and far from thee: sin has spoiled it. Oh then, will not He who has done so much for me already, as His creature, go on and perfect His work? "Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me: *give me understanding that I may learn thy commandments.*" This is prayer; these desires are the dawn of life and happiness. Of such a mind God will say, "Behold I create all things new."

Instead, therefore, of groping in the darkness of our own minds, and wearying ourselves with vain endeavours to rectify our passions, and to become spiritual and devout, this is the straight and easy

course we should take. Until the necessity of His influence is felt, no real progress will be made. How sensible David was of this is evident from the language with which he abounds: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Then shall I go in the way of thy statutes, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." No wonder then, that he made such attainments in religion, and acquired the high appellation of, "The man after God's own heart."

But to what end was it that David prayed for spiritual understanding? it is added, *that I may learn thy commandments*. How many a poor ignorant child is there, even in this land of light, who would think it very easy to learn the commandments without any better understanding than he already possesses! But David well knew the difference between heart and head knowledge. He knew that unless God "opened his understanding" he could never learn his holy law so as to love and to obey it: and till *we* know this, we are not in the way to know or to do any thing that is good. We may read the Bible through and through, store our memory with hymns and catechisms, and yet be destitute of all spiritual knowledge.

Those who are discouraged by a consciousness of their distance from God, their ignorance of Him, and by the backwardness they feel to spiritual attainments, may here learn what to do. Let them hum-

bly and earnestly adopt the language, and enter into the spirit of the text: there is great encouragement implied in it: for we must observe, that this prayer was dictated by the Spirit of God himself: he teaches us thus to pray in order that he may impart these great gifts to us. It is His good pleasure that we should know Him, and learn his commandments, and therefore he thus puts us in the way. All we want is in God's gift: all we are *not*, He can make us; all we know not, He can communicate; all we do not feel, He can inspire. "Ask then, that ye may receive."

And when the mind is truly renewed by His grace, then indeed, may we joy and rejoice in Him as our Creator. Then may we truly praise Him for having *made us and fashioned us*: and then too, may we contemplate this curious but frail tabernacle with unmixed satisfaction, and joyful hope; knowing, that although it must ere long be "sown in weakness," it will one day be "raised in power"—a glorious body, improved and perfected in all its powers and faculties: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Such are the joyous expectations which they possess, who have not only acknowledged God as their Creator, but have also sought of Him spiritual understanding, "*that they might learn His commandments.*" But let it ever be remembered, that none are entitled to such hopes, none may flatter themselves with such cheer-

ing prospects, but those who are thus prepared :  
"Blessed are they," it is said, "that *do His commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the City."







